

Arafat to cut short Vietnam visit

HANOI (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has cut short an official visit to Vietnam because of the continuing violence in south Lebanon. The scheduled meeting with Vietnamese officials to discuss economic cooperation and press conference Sunday were dropped. A Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Saturday. The spokesman gave no reason for the change, but another government official who asked not to be identified said it was because of the situation in South Lebanon. Vietnam has urged Israel to halt its offensive immediately. The chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation held talks with Vietnam's President Le Duc Anh and Communist Party chief Do Muoi Saturday. Mr. Arafat arrived on Friday and is now expected to leave early on Sunday. Vietnam called Saturday for the halt to the Israeli bombardments of southern Lebanon. "These attacks have grossly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "They have trampled on the U.N. Charter, disregarded world public opinion, run counter to the general trend of settlement of conflicts through negotiations and undermined the peace process in the Middle East."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

EC mobilises in defence of EMS

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The monetary committee of the European Community (EC) began emergency talks Saturday to determine the fate of the European Monetary System, as German officials said EC finance ministers would meet to discuss the crisis Sunday. Government officials in Bonn said community finance ministers and central bank governors would meet in Brussels on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. The European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) has been pushed to the brink of collapse by a wave of massive and repeated speculative attacks. German Finance Minister Theo Wuegel, in Salzburg, Austria, for talks with his Swiss and Austrian counterparts, meanwhile pledged continued support for the EMS. The monetary committee, comprising treasury and central bank officials of EC member states, was discussing measures to counter speculation which Friday brought five currencies out of seven to the floor of their permitted ranges against the mark, and which threatened to drive the French franc out of the system altogether. Meeting at Germany's request, it was authorised to recommend possible realignments within the ERM that would enable the system to survive. However, no vote leaked of the deliberations which were expected to last several hours. Its deliberations were seen as the most crucial in the ERM's 14-year history.

Volume 17 Number 5371

AMMAN SUNDAY, AUGUST 1, 1993 SAJR 12, 1414

Price: 150 Fils

230,000 displaced in south Sudan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The governor of south Sudan's Upper Nile state, Colonel Paul Reth Kwang, said Saturday that more than 230,000 people had fled from rebel-held areas of Kongor, Ayod and Watt to the government-held towns of Malakal and Bor during July. The governor said the influx into government-controlled areas resulted from armed clashes between rival factions of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). He added that the inter-factional fighting also caused cessation of relief operations by the World Food Programme to that area. Col.

Kabul says Russia to halt attacks

KABUL (R) — Russia agreed Saturday that its forces in Tajikistan would stop cross-border artillery attacks on northern Afghanistan, an Afghan spokesman said after talks between the two sides in Kabul. The agreement came as Kabul Radio reported 20 people were killed and 50 wounded by a Russian bombing raid on the Shahr-e-Bozorg area of northern Badkshan province Saturday (see page 8). The agreement was reached in two hours of talks between Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and a Russian delegation led by Yevgeny Primakov, a special envoy of President Boris Yeltsin, presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said. "We demanded that the Russians stop shelling and bombing on the border," he told reporters. "The Russians gave us assurances that this would stop." The two sides agreed on the need for negotiations to end clashes along Afghanistan's border with the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Morad said.

Bechtel to build Algerian pipeline

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria awarded a \$305 million contract Saturday to the U.S. firm Bechtel to build a pipeline to carry gas to Europe. The 530-kilometre pipeline will run from Hassi R'mel, Algeria's main gas field, in the Sahara desert to the Moroccan frontier and will initially carry 7.2 billion cubic metres of gas a year, rising ultimately to 18.5 billion. Bechtel's Executive Vice-President Michael Thiele said at the ceremony in Algiers: "This is a very important project for the development of Algeria." Work on the Moroccan section of the pipeline started in May. The overall project, costing an estimated \$2.5 billion, will carry Algerian natural gas across north Morocco, under the Straits of Gibraltar, to Seville in Spain.

U.S. calls NATO meeting on Bosnia

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration called for a meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on Monday to discuss the use of air power in Bosnia, an administration official said Saturday. NATO officials in Brussels, Belgium, confirmed that a special meeting would be held.

Orthodox church to cut ties with Jerusalem patriarch

ANKARA (R) — Orthodox Church leaders decided Saturday to suspend relations with the patriarch of Jerusalem and dismiss his two deputies for challenging the authority of Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Alexandria Patriarch Parthenios told a news conference after a two-day crisis meeting of church leaders chaired by Patriarch Bartholomew that they had resolved to cut ties with Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem until Christmas as a warning. They also ordered the dismissal of his two deputies, archbishops Timothy and Hesyehios, Patriarch Parthenios said. "Patriarch Diodorus is harming not only the authorities and rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul) but also those of other Orthodox churches," he declared. He said the patriarchate of Archbishop Bartholomew, widely recognised as spiritual leader of the world's 200 million Orthodox Christians, could take further action against Patriarch Diodorus if he ignored the meeting's decisions.

Israel halts assault on Lebanon

U.S. said to have brokered 'ceasefire'; Arabs urge U.N. action, pledge \$500m relief

Combined agency dispatches

A U.S.-BROKERED "ceasefire" Saturday halted Israel's week-long military blitz that has driven half a million people from their homes in South Lebanon. U.N. officers in the south said the guns fell silent throughout the area at 6 p.m. (1500 GMT), the time set for Israeli jets, warships and artillery to stop their attacks. "It is very quiet all around," said an officer of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), speaking on condition of anonymity in line with standing regulations.

And Prime Minister Rafik Hariri told Cable News Network (CNN) in a telephone interview: "So far, yes, I get the information from the field that there is a ceasefire."

The accord was worked out by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in telephone contacts with leaders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria, said diplomatic sources in Beirut, speaking on condition of anonymity. Information Minister Michel Samaha expressed his "profound relief" at the end of the Israeli bombardment, which he said was "a sort of a holocaust." "We are profoundly relieved that the United States made Israel finish its bombardments. For Lebanon (the Israeli attacks) are crimes, a sort of a holocaust," Mr. Samaha told AFP.

"The toll is terrible. Tomorrow (Sunday) we will start to organise the return of the refugees. It will be very difficult, for (the Israelis) really destroyed the south. The civilian population has really suffered," he said.

"We can only hope the ceasefire is respected by Israel. And we call, now more than ever, for the implementation of Resolution 425," he said, in reference to the



Lebanese women cry in a pick-up truck after being forced to leave their village of Zaidet in South Lebanon to escape Israeli bombardments.

(Right) Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boudet (right) and his Qatari and Kuwaiti counterparts listen to the debate on the Israeli attack at an Arab League meeting in Damascus (AFP photos)

U.N. Security Council resolution calling for a total Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

Minutes after the ceasefire was reported by radio stations, hundreds of residents surged into the streets of the coastal city of Tyre in jubilation.

Groceries, bakeries, restaurants and cafes quickly reopened after a week-long shutdown. In Israel, Oded Ben-Ami, spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said the truce went into effect after Lebanon's Hizbollah (Party of God) agreed to stop firing rockets into Israel.

The spokesman indicated that both Syria and Lebanon, as well as other powers in the region that support Hizbollah would rein in the attacks. He did not elaborate, but the militia is trained and armed by Iran. There was no immediate comment from the group's

spokesman in Lebanon. The offensive against Hizbollah and Palestinian groups has been the broadest and bloodiest since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

At least 126 people have been killed and 496 wounded since the Israeli assaults began last Sunday. Beirut's mosques, schools, slums, and waterfront sidewalks are swarming with half a million refugees — more than a tenth of Lebanon's population. Some 270 retaliatory rockets killed three Israelis and wounded 34.

"After political contacts through the United States, the Lebanese government and Syrian government and other parties have reached an understanding under which Hizbollah will stop their Katyusha rocket attacks on Israeli communities," Israeli statement said.

"As a result the cabinet gave



Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boudet (right) and his Qatari and Kuwaiti counterparts listen to the debate on the Israeli attack at an Arab League meeting in Damascus (AFP photos)

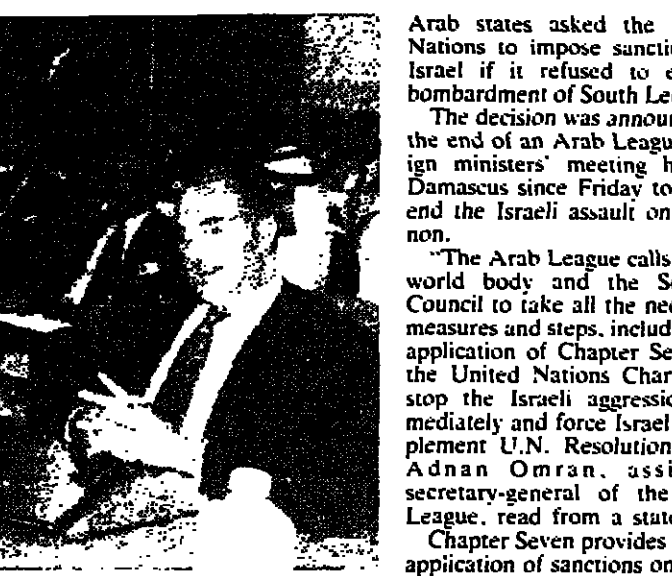
the order to the army to stop the operation."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres congratulated the United States for their lead role in arranging an end to hostilities. "I hope there will be no more rockets for a very long time now," he told Israeli Radio.

The ceasefire opens the way for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to visit the Middle East next week and concentrate on the peace process rather than the Lebanese confrontation.

The foreign ministers of Arab countries resolved in a two-day meeting in the Syrian capital of Damascus to extend assistance of \$500 million to ease the refugees' plight.

A half-hour before the ceasefire, Israeli jets and warships blasted a base of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in hills overlooking



Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boudet (right) and his Qatari and Kuwaiti counterparts listen to the debate on the Israeli attack at an Arab League meeting in Damascus (AFP photos)

the coastal town of Naameh, 18 kilometres south of Beirut, police said.

They said six jet fighter-bombers staged seven bombing and rocketing runs on the bluffs beginning at 5:30 p.m. (1430 GMT) while Cherbourg missile boats hit the base from about three kilometres offshore.

There was no immediate report of casualties from the target, which was engulfed in flames and smoke.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin stressed throughout the last seven days that he would call off the fiercest Israeli pounding of Lebanon in more than a decade once he was sure the rocketing would not resume in the future.

But he ignored Friday a statement by Hizbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah that he was ready to halt the rocketing if Israel stopped the bombardment, although behind-the-scenes con-

tacts for a ceasefire via Washington's mediation were already well underway.

Mr. Peres said Israel's campaign against Hizbollah and other groups contributed to Middle East peace. "The fight against Hizbollah was actually an operation for the peace process, because Hizbollah tried to destroy the peace process," he said.

Hizbollah opposes the 21-month-old U.S.-brokered peace process. Israel, which unleashed an exodus of refugees on Beirut in a conscious attempt to pressure the Lebanese government into curbing Hizbollah, said the refugees could return to their homes in the south if peace was maintained.

Its statement quoted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as saying the main test of the agreement would be cessation of firing of Katyushas at northern Israel.

In Damascus earlier Saturday.

(Continued on page 10)

Government rejects Brotherhood threat to stay away from elections

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government Saturday strongly reacted to a threat by the Muslim Brotherhood to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections if the Election Law is changed without the approval of the Lower House of Parliament saying it is unfazed by the threats and "will not be pushed around."

"They (the Brotherhood) are free to take the decision that they want. But nobody can push this government around (and) it is going to govern according to the Constitution," Minister of Information Ma'an Abu Nowar told the Jordan Times in response to the Brotherhood's warning.

In a statement issued Friday, the Brotherhood warned it would "change its position on the elections" if the government amended the law.

"We will seriously consider boycotting the elections if the government changes the Election Law outside the Lower House of Parliament and introduces the one-man-one-vote formula," Brotherhood Deputy and hawki Islamic Action Front (IAF) member Hammam Sa'id said Saturday.

The Brotherhood, which feels targeted by what it sees as an imminent government decision to change the Election Law also warned that amending the law without the approval of the legislature would cause "a big stir in society (and) create a state of instability and frustration."

Though the Brotherhood agrees with the government that there are "loopholes" in the law, it differs with it on the mechanism of the change and the amendments that should be made.

It insists that the Lower House is the only authority constitutionally empowered to amend the law and is especially opposed to introducing the one-person-one-vote formula.

Dr. Sa'id claimed that "it is the Americans who are pushing for the one-man-one-vote system," which observers believe would, work against the Brotherhood.

Along with other political groups in the country, the Brotherhood, which will contest

the coming elections on the IAF ticket, also criticises the government for its "confusing policy" on the elections.

"The government's position is not right, (it is) unacceptable. It has to take a firm and clear stand on the matter," said Dr. Sa'id.

A highly-informed political observer joined the Brotherhood in criticising the government for what he called the lack of clarity on its election policy as well as the delay in taking a decision.

"There is a sense of frustration about the lack of clarity on the elections," said the observer, who asked not to be named.

He said people are frustrated with the delay in announcing the government decision on the election and on the possible mechanism for change which "could jeopardise democracy." Parliamentary candidates are also not able to formulate and start their election campaigns because of the uncertainty about the law that will govern the ballots, he said.

While His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali have repeatedly said that no changes on the law would be made without thorough consultations with all concerned parties, the Brotherhood and at least other 14 political parties insist that changes should only be affected through the House.

In a letter sent to Dr. Majali by 15 political groups Tuesday, the country's major political parties urged the "reconsideration" of the Election Law through the House.

They agreed with Dr. Majali that there are "loopholes" in the legislation and proposed "fundamental" changes to it but opponents of a unilateral government action on the law among the signatories argued that no time was left to introduce the changes before elections are held later in November.

The highly-informed political observer said that the Cabinet of Dr. Majali should make use of the consensus on the need for the change by opening a dialogue with political groups in the country.

He said the government should follow the "inclusion" policies of its predecessors and consider the

Majali briefs Cabinet on efforts over Lebanon

Russian envoy demands implementation of SCR 425

Combined agency dispatches

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian government hopes that the world community in general and the U.N. Security Council in particular will interfere to put an end to Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said Saturday.

"The continuing aggression on Lebanon is causing heavy human and material losses and forcing the evacuation of Lebanese people from their towns and villages," he said at a Cabinet meeting, a few hours before Israel announced a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Denouncing the Israeli attacks as a violation of all international and human rights laws, Dr. Majali said, "The continuation of the aggression will result in very harmful consequences to the whole region and poses threat to the Middle East peace process."

Dr. Majali briefed the Council of Ministers on the situation in

Lebanon and His Majesty King Hussein's contacts to halt the Israeli assault on the Lebanese people.

He was speaking after having had a telephone conversation with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri to whom he conveyed the King's efforts to end the Israeli attacks, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Dr. Majali announced that Jordan was ready to offer Lebanon every possible assistance.

The prime minister reiterated Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the Israeli attacks on Lebanon at a meeting with a senior Russian diplomat currently on a visit to Jordan.

Petra quoted Dr. Majali as deploring Israel's aggression and demanding that it pull out its forces from southern Lebanon territory.

Continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon is the source

of all tension and instability in the whole region.

Dr. Majali said at a meeting with Viktor Posuvalyuk, head of the Middle East and Africa Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Posuvalyuk said his country considers the Middle East, process as of utmost concern and priority.

The Russian envoy said in a statement to the press afterwards that Russia was keen on giving momentum to the peace process.

"Being close to the Middle East, Russia is affected by it and interacts with the events in the Middle East and is in contact and constant coordination with the United States over the developments," he said.

"The achievement of peace in the Middle East is of high national interest to Russia, which seeks to establish good relations with

all the countries of the region," he said.

Reiterating his country's demand for an immediate halt to Israel's military operations, the envoy said that the operations were disproportionate to the attacks claimed by Israel to have been launched on its positions by Lebanese resistance forces.

Events in southern Lebanon threaten the whole region's stability as well as the peace process, the envoy said.

He said Russia strongly demands the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution (SCR) 425, which calls for Israeli forces withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The envoy said that he would meet with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on the peace process which is almost derailed, during a visit to Tunisia after Jordan.

Christopher poised to launch mission

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was credited Saturday with brokering an end to a week of savage Israeli attacks on South Lebanon.

Mr. Christopher spent much of the past few days conferring by telephone with officials in Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

Diplomatic sources in the region, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the ceasefire was negotiated in Damascus.

Mr. Christopher plans to leave this weekend for Egypt and then go on to Israel, Syria and Jordan. He hopes to concentrate on getting the parties on track for a new round of peace talks.

The fighting in southern Lebanon had raised concerns that the main purpose of his trip would be pushed aside by the need to negotiate a ceasefire.

On his trip, Mr. Christopher plans to press Syria to bar access to Iranian cargo planes carrying weapons to Hizbollah, the Washington Post said Saturday, quoting unidentified U.S. officials.

The report said U.S. intelli-



Warren Christopher

gence has determined that most if not all of the rockets and other arms being used against Israeli forces in recent fighting were ferried to Hizbollah guerrillas by trucks from Damascus airport.

The peace talks began in Madrid, Spain, almost two years ago but progress has been negligible.

U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright suggested during an interview on the U.S. news show "John McLaughlin's One-on-One" that Hizbollah bears prime responsibility for the hostilities.

The Hizbollah guerrillas, she said, are "stirring up the pot at the moment because the peace talks may not be going their way."

But Egyptian Ambassador Ahmad Maher Al Sayed said the Israeli attacks into southern Lebanon were "most deplorable and condemnable." He said the Israelis were engaging in a deliberate policy of "depopulating part of an independent country."

Israel's attacks in southern Lebanon have produced an estimated 500,000 refugees.

Mr. Christopher had been scheduled to arrive in Cairo Saturday after a visit to Asia. But he cut short that trip so that he could return to Washington for consultations that President Bill Clinton on the violence in southern Lebanon and on the deteriorating situation in Bosnia.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said the secretary was to leave Washington Saturday or Sunday but would not confirm a statement by Egypt's foreign minister that Mr. Christopher was to arrive in Cairo, Monday.

"He's going to be conducting these meetings next week in the

Middle East," was all Mr. McCurry would say.

Congressional sources said Mr. Christopher was also to go to Europe, stopping in Brussels to meet with allied ministers on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The State Department has not confirmed that visit.

Mr. McCurry said Christopher will begin his Middle East visit in Cairo but that there were no plans to meet with Lebanese officials.

State Department officials "certainly hope to see the fighting end, because it's very, very important to see the discussions return to what are the core issues at stake in the peace negotiations," McCurry said.

However, he said he could not put "a simple label on the goal" of the Christopher visit.

Mr. McCurry said the United States did not consider the Israeli assault on South Lebanon an invasion, because for now it has been limited to Israel's self-declared "security zone."

But "clearly, a movement north beyond the security zone would be a very different matter... a matter of great concern," he said.

Iraqis exhausted by U.N. embargo

By Laurence Chabert
Agence France Presse

BAGHDAD — Three years of international sanctions have reduced Iraqis to careworn shadows of their former selves.

Nowadays, everything looks shabby in Baghdad from cars and clothes to the people, who are having to cut back more and more on food and basic essentials. Luxuries like sugar are things of the past.

Prices are rising all the time and for most people it is a struggle just obtaining enough food to stave off hunger.

Ali like all public workers has just had a 30 per cent rise but even with that, "it only makes 400 dinars a month (about \$6 on the black market) and I need ten times more to keep my wife and three children."

He draws on his savings and now and then sells a piece of furniture or drives a taxi after work to earn a little extra.

The family scrapes along but when the children return

to school after the holidays, Ali said he would never be able to afford text and exercise books whose prices have rocketed due to a shortage of paper.

Meat costs 100 dinars for one kilogramme — the equivalent of a week's wage for Ali. A box of 30 eggs costs the same and milk is even more expensive at 130 dinars a litre.

Soft drinks are no longer sugared. Cars, clothing and shoes are repaired time and time again. A pair of tyres costs 12,000 dinars, more than most Iraqis earn in a year.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recently estimated that 18 million Iraqis were living in a situation of "pre-famine." Before the embargo imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the country imported more than 70 per cent of its food.

The FAO, which helps to feed 550 Iraqis outside Kurdistan, said flour had gone up by 18,000 per cent since August 1990, tea by 14,000 per cent, and cooking oil by 8,500

per cent.

The dinar is officially worth \$3.2 but its black market value has sunk to between 65 and 70 for a dollar.

Traders and people who have access to dollars, often thanks to relatives abroad, have been able to weather the crisis and some even flaunt their newly-gotten wealth. But for most, it is a daily battle for the government rations which cover only half the people's needs.

"No one is dying of hunger in Iraq but people are dying from shortage of medicines," said a monk who has lived in Iraq for many years.

Hospitals are half empty but "this is not because no one is ill. It is because we have nothing to treat them with," explained Dr. Tammadher Al Dhaher at Qadisiya Hospital in a poor suburb of Saddam City. "We don't even have any aspirins," he said.

Patients have to bring their own medicines bought at great cost on the black market. A phial of insulin costs 100 dinars.

Public hospitals no longer

do anything but emergency operations. To have a tooth out, a person must be prepared to do without anaesthetic and for patients with chronic complaints like diabetes and asthma, drug shortages can be life-threatening.

Malnutrition has taken a heavy toll among children and cases of gastro-enteritis have multiplied in the heat.

Drinking water and electricity supplies operate at half their previous capacity and in the south 43 per cent of drinking water is contaminated.

Food and medicines were not included in the U.N. embargo but Iraq is short of money. Four or five billion dollars in assets are frozen in foreign countries and up to now, Iraq has rejected U.N. conditions to let it sell \$1.6 billion worth of oil.

The United Nations meanwhile is also running out of cash and has had to limit its aid. "We only have enough to last until September," said Mohammad Zejjari, the coordinator of U.N. activities in Iraq.

International jurists assail Israeli raids

GENEVA (Agencies) — The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has condemned Israel for its attacks on southern Lebanon and its proclaimed policy of driving civilians from their homes.

A statement from the commission's Geneva headquarters said the six days of Israeli artillery barrages and air attacks contravened the principles of international law and went beyond the needs of self-defence.

"The Israeli action is disproportionate. The claim that Israel is defending itself against the Hizbollah militia is undermined by the intensity and the extent of the military operation," the statement said.

The commission, which aims to defend the rule of law throughout the world, was a strong critic of communist regimes throughout the cold war and has also condemned human rights violations in many Arab and Islamic countries.

It said Israel's "indiscriminate targeting of the civilian population" to force people to flee their homes and pressurise the Lebanese government into taking action against Hizbollah had resulted in widespread terror.

Such means used for political ends, the commission declared, "are blatant violations of international humanitarian law."

U.N. complaint

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali objected Friday to warnings that Israeli forces had given to the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) that it could come under fire in the fighting there.

"These warnings constitute an unacceptable interference in UNIFIL's operations," the secretary-general said in a letter to the president of the U.N. Security Council.

The letter included a warning Israel sent to U.N. troops that "all movement in South Lebanon shall be considered hostile" and subject to attack by Israeli forces.

"The heavy bombardments of UNIFIL's area of operation by Israeli aircraft and artillery have brought the force almost to a standstill," wrote the secretary general. "There have been numerous instances of shelling dangerously close to UNIFIL's positions."

Positions held by Nepalese, Irish and Finnish battalions received direct hits but there were

no serious casualties, he said. Israel's "operation accountability" has killed some 120 people in southern Lebanon and wounded 446. It has also forced 500,000 people from their homes.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans criticised Israel for using excessive force in its offensive.

Mr. Evans said Australia understood that Israel should want to take action in self-defence.

"There are at least three things, however, that we find very difficult to understand about Israel's actions," he said in a statement.

"First, we find it difficult to understand how Israel's actions can be seen as within the bounds of reasonable self-defence, given their scope and scale."

Australia also found it difficult to understand how Israel's actions could improve its security, given that Hizbollah guerrillas had continued to fire rockets and were likely to gain sympathy from the Israeli attacks.

"Third, we find it difficult to understand how Israel's actions are going to do anything other than put at risk the peace process generally."

The United States will give Lebanon \$25,000 in aid for families displaced by Israeli bombing, the State Department announced Friday.

The funds will be freed up by U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Ryan Crocker and will come from the embassy's emergency humanitarian aid fund, State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said.

Funding above that amount must be appropriated by Congress, but as of Friday there was no legislation pending on the matter, he added.

Italy said it was sending a planeload of medical supplies to Beirut for refugees.

Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreatta said he made the decision to send supplies after meeting the Saudi, Lebanese and Syrian ambassadors to Italy, a ministry statement said.

The statement said Lebanon's ambassador appealed for help for the large number of refugees arriving in Beirut to escape Israel's air and artillery bombardment of southern Lebanon.

The air shipment of medical supplies will arrive in Beirut on Monday, the statement added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hizbollah retrieves bodies of dead guerrillas

RASHAYA (AFP) — Commandos fired automatic weapons and rockets at an Israeli position in South Lebanon as another unit of fighters recovered the bodies of three Islamic Resistance, a spokesman for the group said. A unit of "Tumut Niba, in the Hizbollah's armed wing, led the attack on 'Tumut Niba' in the central sector of Israel's self-declared 'security zone' in South Lebanon. As they pounded the position, another group of commandos recovered the bodies of three guerrillas who were killed Wednesday, a spokesman for Hizbollah said. Three members of the commando unit were wounded in the operation, the spokesman said, adding there was "little resistance" from the Israeli forces manning the position.

Nadir's friend, ex-wife, ordered to post bail

LONDON (R) — The ex-wife and a friend of fugitive tycoon Asil Nadir were Friday ordered to pay £1.15 million (\$1.7 million) in bail they posted for him or go to prison. Ex-wife Aysegul Nadir was given 28 days to pay the £500,000 (\$740,000) she posted. The judge said he doubted Mrs. Nadir would pay as she was reported to be in northern Cyprus, like Mr. Nadir. London businessman Ramadan Guney was given six months to pay £550,000 (\$825,000) or go to prison for 18 months. The bankrupt head of the fruits-to-electronics firm Polly Peck jumped bail and fled to his native northern Cyprus in May while awaiting trial on theft and false accounting charges. He faces claims of up to £500 million (\$750 million) on his personal estate.

Ethiopia, Eritrea agree to heal wounds

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Eritrean President Issayas Afewerki said Friday he had reached an accord with Ethiopia to heal the wounds of decades of conflict. "We have been beaten and humiliated in the past. Our society have been destroyed. But we have forgotten and forgiven," said Mr. Issayas at the end of his first official visit since Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in May after a referendum. "We have agreed to close the sad chapter of war and heal the wounds completely," he told reporters. Mr. Issayas's Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) seized control of the former Red Sea province in May 1991 after defeating dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam's government army and ending a 30-year war for self-rule. Eritrea, a former Italian colony, was annexed by Emperor Haile Selassie. The two states aim to have common security and defence arrangements "without intervening in each others internal affairs," Mr. Issayas said. They agreed to give dual nationality to citizens of the two countries and there will be wide cooperation on economic issues such as transport and energy.

4 Iraqis sentenced to life in Kuwait

KUWAIT (AP) — Four Iraqi infiltrators who accidentally drove into an Iraqi-laid minefield as they fled Kuwait border police were sentenced Saturday to life in prison for setting up armed roadblocks, stealing cars and resisting arrest. All four men lost either arms or legs when the mines exploded during the June 1992 chase where the borders of Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia converge. The state security court that sentenced the men was told they had been armed with machine guns and four rocket-propelled grenade launchers. In trying to escape they had set up a roadblock, commandeered two cars from Kuwaitis and shot at Kuwaiti policemen, the prosecution said. The Iraqis told the court they were shepherds who had lost their way in the desert. The triangle where they were arrested has long been a favourite area for smugglers, with a floating bazaar selling liquor, which is banned in Kuwait, and discount shops. Kuwait is digging a trench along its 207-kilometre border with Iraq to protect it from smugglers and infiltrators. The ditch is also aimed at preventing Kuwaitis from wandering into Iraq, which has not recognised the border.

Syrian 'arms dealer' freed on bail

ALCALA DE HENARES (R) — An alleged Syrian arms dealer, accused of involvement in the 1985 hijacking of the Italian liner Achille Lauro, was allowed bail and released from prison Friday, court sources said Saturday. Monzar Al Kassar, who has been held in Spain for a year on a number of arms-related charges, secured his temporary freedom by posting sureties totalling two billion pesetas (\$14.3 million). These included mortgage guarantees worth one billion pesetas (\$7.1 million) for two luxury properties owned by Mr. Kassar in the southern Spanish resort of Marbella. The sources said Mr. Kassar was to appear before a judge Saturday to be notified of the terms of his release, which are that he cannot leave Marbella without high court permission. Greeted by his wife and two daughters, Mr. Kassar told journalists he had been the victim of a conspiracy. "I have been 14 months in prison, in terrible conditions. Justice was late in coming, but it came in the end," he said.

Turkish airliner makes emergency landing

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish airliner made an emergency landing in Istanbul after an engine cover fell off and punctured the passenger cabin, newspapers reported on Saturday. They said a Turkish Airlines Airbus-310 took off from Istanbul for Paris with 65 passengers on Friday, but made an emergency landing at the same airport minutes later after the right engine cover came off, causing gashes in the fuselage. The plane had climbed to a height of 1,600 metres when the accident occurred. A 16-year-old French girl, named as Aurelie Jalengues, was slightly injured in the shoulder by a piece of debris. Several passengers told Anatolia news agency they had difficulty in breathing while the stricken plane was returning to Istanbul. Turkish Airlines Director General Tezcan Yaramanci was quoted as saying a technical fault had caused the accident and an investigation was under way.

Kuwait to build new detention centre

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said Saturday it planned to construct a purpose-built detention centre for people awaiting deportation to replace a converted school criticised by members of parliament as inadequate. Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al Hamoud Al Jabir Al Sabah issued a decree forming a special committee to find a suitable site for a building to replace Talha centre.

Washington uses garrote and stick against Baghdad

By Jacques Charmelot
Agence France Presse

WASHINGTON — On Aug. 2, 1990, Iraq sent its troops into Kuwait. Three years later, the United States is still making Iraq pay for its defiance.

The Iraqi army left the oil-rich emirate in February 1991 after weeks of intensive bombing and a ground offensive executed by the most formidable military coalition since World War II.

Then the international community, again led by the United States, hit the Iraqi government with a series of tough sanctions to ensure that Baghdad will not be able to inflict damage on a neighbouring state for a long while.

And the 18 million inhabitants of what was the most powerful country in the Arab World are now caught between brutal state power and privations caused by a far-reaching embargo, with signs of pity from the rest of the world increasingly rare.

President Bill Clinton first seemed prepared to ease the pressure on Iraq, but quickly decided to follow policies begun by his predecessor George Bush.

This strategy has meant strictly maintaining the embargo and other U.N. sanctions, keeping tight control on the Iraqi military and attempts to create a viable political alternative to Saddam Hussein.

The Democratic administration is sufficiently convinced of the validity of this approach that it is ready to use force if it looks like Iraq once again presents a threat, as illustrated by periodic U.S. attacks on Iraqi surface-to-air missiles.

This "garrote and stick" strategy consists of keeping in isolation a country whose petroleum wealth and relationship with Iraq have made it a key actor in that part of the world. The policy has been criticised for being unimaginative, especially since the threat of a



Saddam Hussein



Bill Clinton

fundamentalist Iran remains and Iraq had been used as a counterweight. But the State Department has no plans to replace it.

"This is a long term policy which keeps in check the threat from Iraq to our vital interests in the Gulf region," Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Edward Djerejian told Congress.

Washington has given no indication that Baghdad's most recent gestures regarding long-term control of its military — such as allowing the United Nations to install cameras on ballistic missile test sites — have lessened its determination.

"Everything is left to do" with respect to complying with U.N. resolutions ending the Gulf war, a State Department official said privately.

"Iraq is not complying with much of anything," the official said. "Iraqi promises are meaningless.... There is not a single promise for two and one-half years that the Iraqis have kept of their own will."

The official said he believed that the international coalition against Iraq was still solid, and European and Arab expressions of discontent with U.S. muscle — such as the recent bombing of Baghdad following the discovery of an alleged plot

against Mr. Bush's life — should not be exaggerated. The only concern in Washington is that the Iraqi opposition has been unable to reach an agreement on critical points.

"Given the history of the Iraqi opposition the most encouraging thing is that it is still there," the official said.

To some experts, this search for an alternative to Saddam Hussein seems to be more of a public relations exercise and less of a diplomatic mission. This is especially true since the end of the Bush administration should have meant the end of the personal nature of the dispute between the United States and Iraq.

"There is a benefit for the U.S. in keeping Saddam Hussein in power and it can go on for long time," said Souheib Ghandour, a journalist who specialises in Iraq. "The sanction can keep him weak and it can be used in the future."

To Mr. Ghandour, the U.S. plan to be tough on Iraq with President Saddam in power means Washington can avoid a dangerous upheaval in Iraq if the leadership falls. It also means there is no risk of a resurgence in Iraqi power as long as the United States is ready to ensure Gulf states are safe from Iraqi "ambition."

Demjanjuk due in Ukraine today

KIEV (R) — John Demjanjuk, cleared of being Nazi camp guard "Ivan the terrible" after spending seven years in an Israeli jail, is due to return at least temporarily to the land of his birth, Ukraine, on Sunday.

The Ukrainian Demjanjuk Defence Committee said Saturday the 73-year-old former U.S. car worker would be put on a flight from Tel Aviv to Kiev, arriving at 5.40 p.m. (1440 GMT).

Israeli police confirmed the report. But the Israeli justice ministry said Demjanjuk could only leave if the supreme court, meeting on Sunday, rejected calls for him to be tried on further war crimes charges.

The defence committee said in a statement: "We consider that until Demjanjuk goes to the United States, he should accept Ukrainian citizenship in his Ukrainian homeland and thank the hundreds of people who struggled for his freedom."

The best solution would be for Demjanjuk's appeal for the return of his U.S. citizenship, stripped from him in 1984, to be heard by an American jury, it said.

The committee called on Kiev citizens to welcome Demjanjuk at Borispol airport.

The U.S. Justice Department said on Friday that Demjanjuk was ineligible to re-enter the United States because he had served as a guard at Nazi camps and lied about it when he originally applied to emigrate to the United States.

Demjanjuk, acquitted on appeal of being a camp guard nicknamed "Ivan the terrible" because of doubts as to his identity, has insisted he wants to rejoin his family in Ohio.

Oleksandr Maydanek, a diplomat at Ukraine's embassy in Israel, said by telephone that Demjanjuk's son John had asked for permission on Friday for his father to come to Ukraine.

The freed man had received an invitation from relatives in Izium, near Kharkov, to come and visit them temporarily, Maydanek said.

Ukrainian Orthodox churches and communities throughout the United States and Canada raised thousands of dollars for Demjanjuk's defence.

University professor kills uncle as he saw in a dream

CAIRO (AP) — Dr. Hani Rifaat's neighbours describe the university professor as a quiet, kindly man, a specialist in internal medicine who provides free treatment to people too poor to pay.

They find it hard to believe that Dr. Rifaat, 42, said his morning prayers, then slashed the throat of the uncle who reared him since he was 9.

"I killed my uncle to rid him of the sufferings of life," Dr. Rifaat told the newspaper Al Ahrar. "I loved him so much. He is the greatest person in history and shouldn't have to live in this world full of conflicts."

Al Ahrar and other Cairo newspapers devoted pages Saturday to the killing. It was the latest of a troubling series of "violent crime cases involving seemingly unlikely suspects that has shaken Egypt's traditional, family-oriented Muslim society."

Social commentator and novelist Naguib Mahfouz, a Nobel Prize laureate, attributed the phenomenon to general decay of Egyptian life. Religious, cultural and moral training are breaking down, he wrote in his weekly column. And attacks by Muslim extremists on secular society have

created an atmosphere of violence.

In recent weeks, newspapers have reported deaths of fathers, mothers, other close relatives. Suspects have blamed narcotics, money or — as in Dr. Rifaat's case — inexplicable causes.

Just before dawn, the doctor awoke from a dream in which he told investigators he saw himself slaughtering his uncle. He got up, prayed, took a butcher knife from the kitchen and cut the sleeping 70-year-old man's throat. Dr. Rifaat prayed again, changed his clothes and washed out the blood, then gave himself up to the police.

Dr. Rifaat was graduated with honours from medical school. His office at Ain Shams University is lined with scientific books, its walls hung with certificates and diplomas.

His sister Nadia, 40, said the family has a history of insanity. Their mother died with a mental disorder, and another brother and sister currently are mentally ill, she told reporters.

Miss Rifaat said she and her brother decided not to marry out of fear they would pass on the condition to children.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TIME
17:30 Le monde est à vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal de l'histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step By Step
21:10 The Trials of Life
22:00 News in English
22:30 French series

PRAYER TIMES

06:17 Fajr
05:45 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:42 Dhuhur
16:22 'Asr
19:38 Maghreb
21:07 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 63705
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634930
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 623646
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather will prevail and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

WEATHER

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 21/31
Aqaba 26/38
Dhaka 19/33
Jordan Valley 27/37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 30, Aqaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Al Sawwa 733056
Dr. Mohammad Al Nuhawi 819213
Dr. Jamil Marqaa 776149
Dr. Muekhes Halasa 819220
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 626722
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Najm pharmacy 647632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili 27757
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ziad Ju'itrim 985417
Khaleef pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate

Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage

Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 797111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101
Ardali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power

Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 6424016
Al-Khal Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2
Al-Khal Maternity, J. Amn 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 6641714
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 143945
Al-Muashar Hospital 66727/79
The Islamic, Ahdali 666127/57
Queen Alia Hospital 6616646
Italian, Al-Muashar 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 75111/26
Army, Marka 89161/115
Queen Alia Hospital 662340/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)99990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)225555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
06:15 Athens (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:45 Jeddah (RJ)
06:50 London, Geneva (RJ)
07:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:10 Athens (RJ)
07:20 Madrid, Damascus (RJ)
07:30 Vienna (RJ)
07:40 Rome (RJ)
07:50 Frankfurt, Geneva (RJ)

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
06:15 Athens (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:45 Jeddah (RJ)
06:50 London, Geneva (RJ)
07:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:10 Athens (RJ)
07:20 Madrid, Damascus (RJ)
07:30 Vienna (RJ)
07:40 Rome (RJ)
07:50 Frankfurt, Geneva (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

13:30 Bahrain (RJ)
16:05 Larnaca (CY)
16:30 Moscow (SU)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:50 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday visits a phosphate industry facility in the southern part of the Kingdom (Petra photo)

Regent inspects services, industry in southern areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday toured several areas in southern Jordan, including Wadi Araba, the phosphate mines, Shidiyeh railroad station and Al Mudawwara border post.

The Regent met with Interior Minister Salameh Hamad, the governor of Ma'an and several officials in the Wadi Araba area.

The Crown Prince called for activating the role of local administrations and underlined the importance of cooperation among the governors of the southern parts of the Kingdom in order to better serve the people of these areas.

Prince Hassan then visited Al Shidiyeh mines and met with Minister of Industry and Trade

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Decree appoints 3 justices

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday appointing three Islamic justices to work at the Sharia (Islamic) Appeals Court in Jerusalem as of August 1, 1993. They are: Abdul Qader Abidin (court president) Ibrahim Sabri and Hayan Adrisi.

Regent congratulates Benin, Switzerland

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Saturday sent a cable of good wishes to the president of Benin on his country's national day. The Regent also sent a cable of good wishes to the president of the Swiss Federation on his country's national day, or Sunday. In the two cables, the Regent wished the presidents continued health and further progress and prosperity for their citizens. Also Saturday the Regent visited one of the Armed Forces units in the southern military Region where was received by the commanders of the region and the unit. He was briefed on the unit's duties, watched its drills and met with officers and soldiers, commending their level of performance and conveying to them the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein.

Majali urges speed in vesting authority

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul

Salam Al Majali urged Cabinet members Saturday to speed up procedures for vesting more authority in governors of various provinces in a bid to bolster decentralisation in Jordan. Steps should be taken as quickly as possible to enable governors to exercise full authority in their regions without having to refer to the central government in Amman, said Dr. Majali at a regular Cabinet session. He also instructed the concerned ministries to speed up the development of health services in the Irbid region.

University application process eased

AMMAN (J.T.) — State universities today (Sunday) begin accepting applications for undergraduate study programmes through post offices around the country, according to Abdul Hamid Al Sabbagh, head of a committee in charge of processing student applications. Mr. Sabbagh, who is also general registrar at the University of Jordan, said that the week-long programme facilitates the application process at the four Jordanian universities. Tawjih minimum score requirements for acceptance in the various faculties are: 85 per cent for medicine and dentistry; 80 per cent for pharmacy; engineering and veterinary medicine; and 65 per cent for all other faculties. Earlier reports said at least 10,000 undergraduate students will be accepted for full courses at the Kingdom's public universities.

Rare shower falls on Amman, tremors hit Kingdom

AMMAN (J.T.) — Amman received a refreshing five-minute shower Friday night around 11 p.m., an uncommon occurrence for late July.

According to Ali Abundah, director of the Meteorology Department in Amman, it has rained only twice around this date in the past 20 years.

The spontaneous meeting of cold air in the upper atmosphere mixing with warm, moist air on the earth's surface caused the rain to fall intermittently in the north central and eastern regions of the country, he said.

Thick moisture clouds will hover over the Mediterranean until Monday when weather conditions will return to those more typical of hot and dry summers of the past.

Tremors recorded

Meanwhile a series of tremors hit parts of the Kingdom over the past 24 hours, according to a statement by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Director General Mohammad Abu Ajamieh.

The statement issued at noon Saturday said that at 2:56 p.m. Friday, a tremor measuring 3.2 on the Richter scale hit an area located between longitudes 35 East and 33 North.

At 2:34 a.m. Saturday a tremor measuring 4.8 hit the Nweibeh area in the Gulf of Aqaba and was followed by a series of 20 small tremors in the Aqaba region.

The two strongest tremors in the Aqaba region measured 3.2 and 3.7, the remaining 20 tremors measured below two degrees, said Mr. Abu Ajamieh.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at The Gallery, Hotel Jordan InterContinental.

Exhibition of British Archaeological projects in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.

THEATRE

Arabic play entitled "Ahlam Arab Summit" at 8 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Arabic children's play entitled "Who Will Save Earth" at 6:30 p.m.

FILM

Feature film entitled "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" at 6 p.m. at the American Centre.

NHF surveys Mukheibeh area to plan self-reliance schemes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Saturday announced the start of a social survey in the northern village of Mukheibeh, as part of its Quality of Life Project.

Through the project, the NHF aims to introduce activities that will raise the standard of living in the rural regions of Jordan.

The Mukheibeh field survey in Irbid governorate seeks to determine the villagers' basic needs prior to developing and implementing programmes under the Quality of Life Project.

The NHF team will examine the standard of health education and mother and child care services offered in the area and the economic standard of its various households.

The survey will follow the pattern of those conducted earlier in 12 other population settlements in Jordan and two surveys still under way in Qinih and Bir Hadad.

These settlements together have an estimated 3,500 families, according to an NHF statement.

The statement said the survey is being conducted by a specially trained team employed at health and social centres; the team will be working together with a group of local community leaders.



The Noor Al Hussein Foundation Quality of Life Project assesses and evaluates the needs of a rural community in order to determine how best to implement income-generating schemes to help families work towards self-reliance.

The Quality of Life Project, engineered by NHF in 1989 in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Health Ministry, works to increase individual family incomes and promote a more wholesome village environment, the NHF statement said.

It said the project is designed to raise family living standards in the health, social and cultural spheres.

The project promotes patterns of integrated and rural development encompassing all aspects of

village life. Emphasis is placed on self-reliance and participation by the population through coordination and cooperation among all the parties involved in serving the local community, according to NHF.

Wadi Araba villages to get 84 housing units

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Saturday announced that it is constructing a JD 915,000 housing project at Wadi Araba. JVA Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wishah said RITA, a local construction firm, has won a tender for the project, which is being executed upon directives by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

The project, said Dr. Wishah, is seen as part of an overall plan to develop the Wadi Araba region which extends from the

southern tip of the Dead Sea to Aqaba.

It will provide suitable housing for the local residents and improve their living conditions," he added.

According to Dr. Wishah, the project entails constructing a total of 84 housing units of 56 square metres each on 1,500 square metres of land.

Four villages Rahmeh Risheht Gharrad, Bir Mathkour and Qureiqra, will benefit from the project.

Ministry appeals for aid to Lebanese

AMMAN (J.T.) — Plans to extend financial and in-kind assistance to the victims of the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon have been implemented with a Ministry of Social Development appeal Saturday to the public and voluntary and charitable organisations.

The ministry said the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation was coordinating efforts with the ministry and its affiliated departments in the governorates to raise contributions for this humanitarian cause.

started by the Ramtha social and voluntary societies in cooperation with the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). Meanwhile, a Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat Saturday left for Beirut for a meeting designed to show solidarity with the Lebanese people.

The delegation will attend an extraordinary session at the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) to discuss the situation in southern Lebanon.

Trade group finalises plans for polish industrial fair

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Trade Association (JTA) has finalised arrangements for organising a Jordanian industrial fair in the Polish capital of Warsaw. JTA Executive Director Halim Abu Rahmeh said the fair, which will open on August 30, will display samples of Jordanian carpets, paints, car batteries, perambulators, gas ranges, furniture, syringes, soaps, antiseptics, chemical detergents, car filters domestic appliances and thermopipes.

The Jordanian products to be displayed at the fair are of excellent quality and can easily compete with foreign products Mr. Abu Rahmeh said.

The five-day fair is an opportunity for Jordanian exporters to familiarise the Polish with Jordanian products and open new markets in that country and in eastern



The Jordanian stand at the 28th Import Fair Berlin (photo by Wolfgang Albrecht)

Europe, he added.

The JTA, he said, carefully studied the prospects for marketing Jordanian products in Poland

before deciding on the industrial fair.

Last year Poland bought JD 2.5 million worth of Jordanian products and sold JD 4.5 million

worth of Polish-made commodities to the Kingdom, according to Mr. Abu Rahmeh.

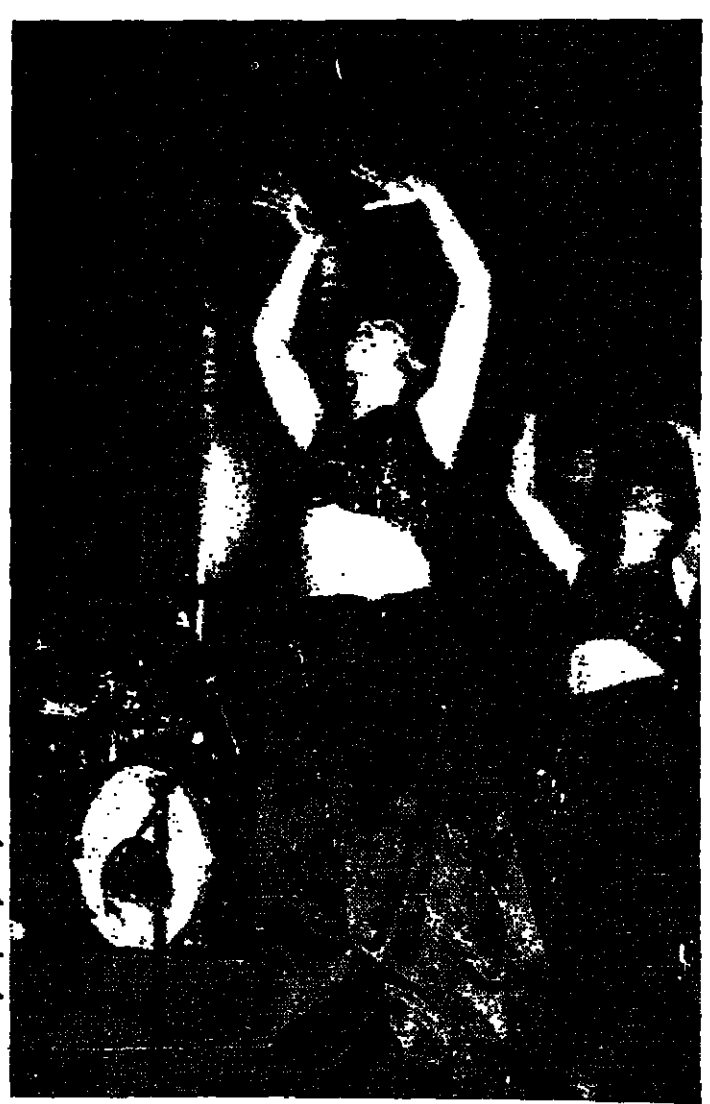
Jerash grand finale closes 12th annual festival of arts and culture



The 12th Jerash Festival came to a close Friday night following a major celebration attended by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and Princess Wijdan Ali. The festival's torch was extinguished and the banner was furled as the brass bands of the Armed Forces played the National Anthem. Festival Director Akram Masarweh thanked the participating troupes in the 17-day event which brought performers and audiences together in a mid-summer night fair. At left the Lebanese troupe Caracalla in one of its three performances held at the Palace of Culture in Amman as part of the activities of the festival of culture and arts. The troupe, one of the leading in the Arab World, performed a play entitled "A Dream of an Eastern Night," which is based on one of William Shakespeare's plays. Abdul Halim Caracalla, who established the troupe almost 25 years ago, said his was the first Arab dance theatre. "We have worked on making the language of the body mingle with the language of our heritage and folklore," he told Agence



France Press (AFP), adding that this enabled the troupe to invent a new dance language unprecedented in the world. Television Director Victoria Umeish said Caracalla's performance has touched the true oriental feeling. Mr. Caracalla, who also designed the costumes for the play, said renowned Arab singer Marcel Khalifeh won the play an award in a festival held in Los Angeles for his musical score. Above, Rai star Sheb Khalid and his troupe of musicians and dancers Friday night delight fans in a grand finale performance at Jerash Festival. The 33-year-old Algerian has recorded almost 70 albums in his career, but his fame reached new heights with his most recent LP release "Khalid" which has sold 4.5 million copies worldwide. Featured on the album is the smash hit "Didi" (take it). The lyrics of Khalid's songs are a mixture of Arabic, Spanish, Italian and French, a combination which is indecipherable to most fans. Nevertheless, Khalid's international appeal continues to grow.



Photos by Aynsley Floyd

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

جوردان تايمز صحيفة سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Subscription and advertising rates are available from the

Jordan Times advertising department.

Why delay the inevitable?

NOW THAT the next parliamentary elections will be held on schedule and the decision to amend the law seems to have been taken, there is no reason why the government should not act on the amendments to the law in order to allow the election campaign to start in earnest. The subject of the new electoral legislation was raised immediately after the 1989 elections and the existing Parliament was expected to act on this important matter a long time ago. There were many legislations that needed the urgent attention of Parliament and nearly four years have elapsed without much being done about them. The issue is of course complex and controversial and calls for prudence and preparation. It also requires national consensus. Most of the discussions on the subject were so far made in corridors, living rooms and in political gatherings but little debate has been done in the media. The one-person-one-vote principle drew criticism from some of the major political parties who saw in the campaign to introduce this principle a determined policy to weaken their power in the Lower House of Parliament. On the strength of this suspicion, they naturally insist that any change to the current ground rules on elections must be debated by Parliament and then put any amendments thereon for approval by Parliament itself where major political players enjoy almost a veto power. Had the executive branch of government moved faster on this issue and acted more expeditiously on it, much of the ill-feelings that now exist could have been avoided.

The government needs to develop a more coherent perspective on any proposed amendments and to couple that with a faster pace in putting the process into motion. Until this late hour the government has been giving conflicting signals on when and how it may proceed on this highly important piece of legislation. November is only a few months ahead and the country has still no definitive blueprint for the draft law. One does not know when the government is going to spell out change to one of the main tools of pluralistic democracy. There is every argument for making things clearer on the subject by making known the text of any draft law for national deliberations whether formal or informal. As things stand now no one knows for sure which way the government will turn. That has only helped draw angry outbursts from opponents to amendment but little clear response from the government.

The government can always protest that it is acting within the framework of the Constitution. But it has to recognise that by delaying its decision it is creating a state of uncertainty and helping put tempers up. Thousands of potential candidates as well as tens of thousands of potential voters are at loss on which way to base their strategies and preferences. And indecisiveness will only create apathy which in turn will weaken the democratisation process.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

CONFRONTING aggression and conspiracies against the Arab Nation cannot be done through issuing statements and condemning the Israeli practices but through true solidarity and collective action, said Al Dustour daily Saturday in commenting on the Arab World's reaction to Israel's aggression on Lebanon. There is no doubt that the Arab foreign ministers now meeting in Damascus will issue a strongly-worded statement condemning the Israeli brutal attacks on the civilian population and demanding an immediate halt to the hostilities, said the daily. Meeting one week after the start of the Israeli aggression, the Arab foreign ministers have little power to use vis-a-vis this Israeli onslaught and their countries are so divided that they are impotent and weak and can by no means confront the common enemy, it said. It is a foregone conclusion that such a meeting would not rise to the aspirations of the Lebanese people, said the daily. Israel realises the weakness of the Arab masses and can by no means be of help to the Lebanese people whose homes have been destroyed and who sustained heavy human loss in these attacks, added the daily. There is no doubt that the Arab foreign ministers' meeting will describe the Israeli aggression as a threat to the so-called peace process and would issue a call to the world community to come to the aid of the Lebanese people, said the daily. Israel realises the weakness of the Arab countries and has calculated the world public reaction to its aggression before embarking on its fresh attacks, said the daily. It expressed hope that the Arab foreign ministers will make of the new aggression a starting point for real solidarity without which no Arab rights can be guaranteed.

MAZEN HUAZI, a columnist in Al Ra'i, demanded a collective Arab stand in the face of Israel's aggression and not mere meetings and statements of condemnation. Referring to a statement by American President Bill Clinton, praising Syria for self-restraint during the Israeli attacks, the writer said that self-restraint could well be interpreted as Syria wanting to expose Israel's position with regard to the peace process, but such restraint does not appease the Arab masses. The Arab masses cannot accept any interpretation or analysis of the present Arab countries' passive attitude towards this aggression, and they demand that collective action be taken to deter the Jewish state from further committing atrocities, said the writer. Of course a limited Syrian or Lebanese military action cannot achieve the object, although temporarily it could give Arab masses some satisfaction, he added. What is required, he demanded, is a unified Arab stand and a joint military confrontation which, the writer said, could impose the Arab will not on Israel alone but also on the backing its aggression. Even in the peace process, he said, a collective action and a unified stand are required to ensure that the Arab Nation's voice is heard by the world community. What Mr. Clinton expects from Syria now is to end all resistance activity against Israel coming from Lebanon, said the writer. He said that such a request could not have been made had the Arabs been more united and addressing the world in one language.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fehed Al Fanek

New government is committed to the adjustment programme

The outgoing minister of finance was right to insist on quitting the Ministry of Finance after 50 months in office under three prime ministers. People will think it is Basil Jardaneh's programme and that the economic adjustment programme will be abandoned as soon as he leaves office, he argued and prevailed.

Now that we have a new government and a new minister of finance, we should not be surprised to hear rumours that the commitment to the programme has weakened. But the facts are completely different.

According to the policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a new government has the right to renegotiate the programme all over again, from square one. A government commitment is not binding to another government unless the latter chooses to be bound.

The government of Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali was therefore given the opportunity to suspend the programme as it stands now and to call on new negotiations with the IMF to either change certain aspects in the targets or policies or to cancel the programme altogether. However, the new government refrained from using this opportunity, and chose to carry on and honour the latest letter of intent as is. This fact, which should have been made public, gives the evidence that the new government is fully committed to the programme with no reservations what-so-ever.

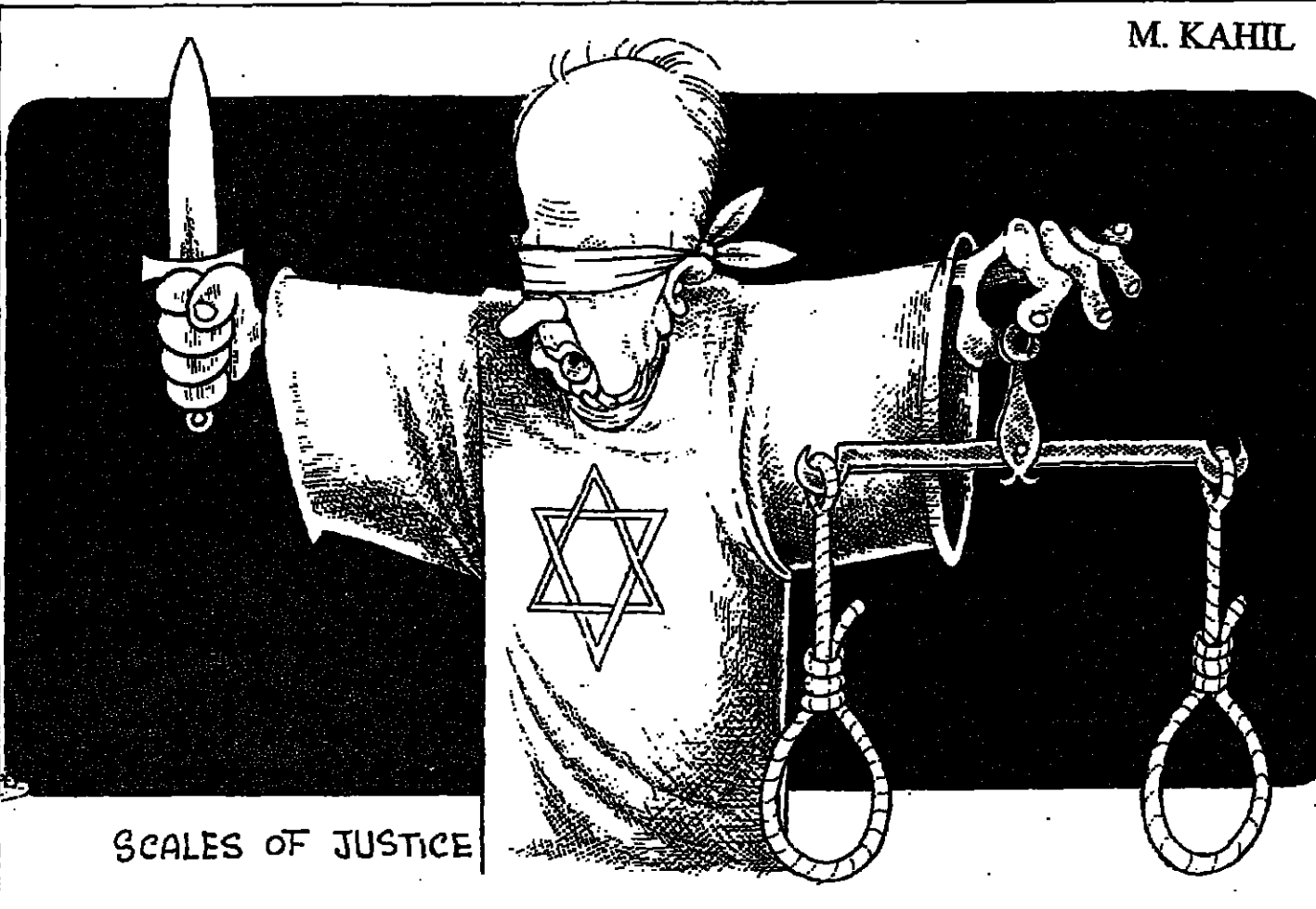
On the other hand, the new minister of finance, Sami Gammo did not come from nowhere. He is well-known to be a strong supporter of the programme and in full agreement with the course of action which was taken by his predecessor, whom we once described as the best minister of finance in the Third World.

The recent conclusion of a framework agreement with the London Club by the minister of finance of the new government, based on the points negotiated and agreed upon before, was another signal of continuation. Had the new government or the minister of finance been less committed to the programme, the London Club agreement would have been put on hold, either by the government or by the London Club's steering committee, because an adjustment programme acceptable to the IMF is a precondition for concluding an agreement with the London Club over commercial indebtedness.

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the adherence to the programme was highlighted by His Majesty's letter of designation to the new prime minister, who responded positively, in full agreement with the content of the letter, which could be defined as the terms of reference for the new government. Thus, the commitment to the programme is more a commitment of the state rather than of a particular government.

As far as implementation is concerned, we noticed that the new government made several difficult decisions in its very first week in office to satisfy alternative measures to the post-ponement of the general sales tax until February 1994. Those measures were supposed to be taken by the previous government, but it hesitated to act and left the difficult job at the door of the new government.

If that meant anything, it is that the new government is fully and irrevocably committed to the IMF programme. Any whispers to the contrary can be classified, in my view, as putting more pressure on Jordan, to give the feeling of vulnerability and uncertainty for political ends that can only be comprehended by cynical analysts.



Meretz joins the hawks

By Haim Baram

WEST JERUSALEM — A minor row broke into the open on July 18 when three Meretz members of Knesset (MKs), including the new minister of education, Amnon Rubinstein, leaked to the press an angry letter which had been sent to the most prominent and active human rights organisation in Israel, B'tselem.

The incident was wrought with heavy irony, since Mr. Rubinstein and his parliamentary colleague, Dedi Tzucker, were founding members of B'tselem, and used the Palestinian human rights issue as a spring-board for vehement attacks on the previous Likud government. But now that Meretz is a full partner in the government with the most appalling human rights record in

Israel's history, B'tselem has become a painful sore. Its most recent report, castigating the Rabin government for killing 38 children under 16 since January 1993, put Meretz leaders in an unpleasant spot, as far as their rank and file supporters are concerned.

Meretz ministers, like the so-called Labour doves, tend to ignore human rights violations under the ludicrous pretext that they are not in the business of overseeing a "benevolent occupation", but rather are determined to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories for good. In the meantime, they cling to the Rabin formula of a Greater Jerusalem (comprising 30 per cent of the West Bank) under Israeli sovereignty, which renders the

achievement of a viable agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians a virtual impossibility.

Meretz decided to berate B'tselem over the delay in the publication of the long overdue report on the 500 collaborators who have allegedly been killed by their fellow Palestinians. Such a report is perhaps legitimate, but hardly relevant. The task of B'tselem is to collect data about the crimes of the occupation authorities against Palestinians, and not to muddle in the internal affairs of the victims. Mr. Rubinstein and his friends, all firm supporters of the mass deportation of 413 Palestinians in December 1992, clearly seek a convenient diversion from the plight of the oppressed by pointing a self-

righteous finger at their admittedly harsh methods of dealing with collaborators.

This sorry affair has understandably delighted right-wingers, who abhor B'tselem for its courageous struggle on behalf of Palestinians in the occupied territories. It was a godsend for Yitzhak Rabin as well, who took to emotional outbursts during the first half of July. Not only the prolonged civil servants' strike over low pay has irked the prime minister, but his cabinet has got out of hand, too: it now resembles a huge and rather unruly debating society. Mr. Rabin was prevented by his colleagues from attacking Lebanon this month and nine of his ministers indicated their willingness to talk to the sadly weakened PLO — Middle East International.

Bosnia's resentful Croats say they are misunderstood

By Kurt Schork

Reuter

CAPLJINA, Bosnia — Sunbaked and silent, the Bosnian Croats' sullen stronghold of Capljina does not welcome strangers. Empty streets, burned-out storefronts and apartment blocks pockmarked by shells and small arms fire speak of old grudges settled violently.

"There is more and more blood and hatred. When are you leaving?" says a message scrawled in green paint on the wall of one block of flats — presumably aimed at Muslims, most of whom have been driven from the town.

"I will not speak to you under any circumstances," splutters Bonifacije Barbaric, a Roman Catholic priest. "We don't trust the press, you distort the truth."

Truth in Bosnia, if there is any to be found after 16 months of civil war, takes a variety of forms. Croats, Serbs and Muslims each have their own version, for which they kill and are killed.

Father Barbaric recollects relatives burned alive by Serb parti-

sans 50 years ago.

He fumes at the second-class status endured by Croats who refused to join the Serb-dominated Communist Party which ruled former Yugoslavia until the country began disintegrating three years ago.

"These are the historical realities of our existence, which foreign reporters ignore," he says. "Josip Broz Tito, the communist who ruled Yugoslavia unchallenged until his death in 1980, was a Croat."

"You make a kind of equation between Croats and Serbs in this war and say we are the same. There is a difference between communists and Croats, but you don't see it."

When the Bosnian civil war broke out 16 months ago, Croats and Muslims fought as allies against rebel Serb forces.

That alliance shattered early this year under the force of Serb military advances. Now Croats and Muslims are battling each other for territory.

If the historical divide between Catholic Croats and Orthodox

Serbs runs deep in this part of Bosnia, it is at least a gulf between rough equals.

Croats here speak of Muslims as a different species.

"We cannot have friends among the Muslims because they are underdeveloped people," said a man in the Capljina area who gave his name but requested that it not be used.

"Their birth rate is excessive. They breed like rabbits and they are making the Croat a minority in his own land."

The accepted answer here seems to be to drive Muslims out by force, a process called "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia.

Ethnic Cleansing was first practised by rebel Serbs against Croats during fighting in Croatia in 1991, then by Serbs against Muslims and Croats in Bosnia.

Now all three groups are trying to "cleanse" territories they hold, anticipating the possible partition of Bosnia into separate ethnic states.

"In the name of Christian charity we cannot allow Muslims to take our land or our homes," said

Father Barbaric. "What man would not take up a gun to defend himself?"

Other Croats in the area, remembered as a stronghold of Nazi-inspired ustashi forces in World War II, take a more extreme view of the Muslim problem and its solutions.

"We should pray to God for another kind of Hitler to be born to bring Europe back to reason," said one, who asked not to be identified.

"Sweden is taking in Muslims as refugees but it's only a matter of time before they drive them out too. Europe cannot co-exist with the Muslims."

Reporters touring Capljina stop to investigate at a row of wrecked shops. A charred cafe is flanked by smaller businesses with shattered windows.

"The Muslim cafe was bombed two nights ago," explains a Croat jeweller in the next shop also destroyed in the blast.

Suddenly a huge man appears on the street outside the shop, barking: "Police this interview is over."

Israel to pay for gambles of the past

By Martin Woolcott

THE MOST important fact about the Middle East today is that Israel needs peace more than its Arab opponents but still sees no clear path towards it. Out of this frustration has come the storm of metal beating down on the stone villages of South Lebanon for the last week.

The refugees reel up once again towards Beirut, the shells pour from the guns, helicopter gunships skim the wheatfields. Bodies lie in the sun at crossroads. Back from Hizbollah's Katyusha batteries are the rockets heading for Israel's northern towns and settlements. How many times have we witnessed these scenes, how many times deplored them, and how many times have they proved to be nothing more or less than the steel links which chain a violent past to a violent future? But, in the Middle East, the military solution always beckons, like the mirage it usually proves to be.

What the Israelis are calling "Operation Accountability" falls into a now ancient pattern in which the Israelis seek not only to hurt their actual attackers but to pressure Arab governments, in this case Syria, into suppressing them on Israel's behalf. The Israelis are responding to a month of successful attacks by Hizbollah, the armed Lebanese Shiite movement, and by the radical Palestinian splinter group Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). GC led by Ahmad Jibril, in which they have lost a number of soldiers. They came close to retaliation earlier this month, but were pulled back from the brink by two State Department envoys who were in the region to prepare the way for the visit by Warren Christopher, the U.S. Secretary of State, with the aim of reinvigorating the Middle East peace talks.

The obviously prepared response nevertheless went into effect last weekend, and Mr. Christopher is now rushing to the region as a fireman rather than arriving as a statesman. Needless to say Israel's Syria rationale, as expressed by senior government spokesmen, is open to argument. Syria certainly allows the Hizbollah movement to function in parts of Lebanon over which it has control; and without Syrian acquiescence the dubious deal under which Hizbollah alone among the Lebanese factions is allowed to openly retain its weapons, and to use them against Israeli forces in that part of Lebanon occupied by Israel and its proxies, would not have been struck. So, yes, in a sense Syria is responsible for Hizbollah violence. But the larger truth is that Syria tolerates Hizbollah in Lebanon because of the Damascus regime's closeness to Tehran, that in turn being related to Syria's long-standing quarrel with Iraq. It also tolerates Hizbollah because that movement is now a genuinely powerful one in Lebanon society, difficult if not impossible to suppress. Nobody but an idiot in Jerusalem could expect Syria to make war on Hizbollah, at least not in the absence of a peace settlement.

Perhaps that is the point which the Rabin government is inversely trying to make to Damascus, since the problem it faces is that 20 months after the peace talks began the negotiations have got nowhere. They have not failed, and areas of progress, genuine shifts in attitude, can be identified. But they are not moving forward. The main reason for this is the structure which a previous Israeli government succeeded in imposing on the talks, dividing them into bilateral sets, and insisting that in the most

critical, that between Israel and the Palestinians, there should be no direct PLO representation and two distinct phases, one about "autonomy" to be followed by a second phase about "final status" or, in other words, about statehood.

The Shamir government believed that this structure could be exploited to bog down the talks for ever, which is what it wanted. The Rabin government, which genuinely wants peace, nevertheless saw what is called the "for-less" as something which could be used to Israel's advantage. Perhaps the Syrians could be seduced into a peace agreement ahead of an autonomy deal with the Palestinians, thus adding to the pressure on the latter to settle. Meanwhile, the division of the phases seemed to offer Israel the opportunity to build into autonomy restrictions that could be transferred to any later offer of statehood, as well as to keep Jerusalem off the agenda.

Such calculations seem in retrospect foolish. The Palestinians have been naturally reluctant to settle for any autonomy that did not at least prefigure statehood, while the Syrians have stonewalled in their talks, taking note of increasingly explicit Israeli signals about a readiness to hand back the Golan but refusing to offer much in return and showing no interest in upstaging the Palestinians. While the talks have meandered from round to round without notable advance, Israel's security has deteriorated markedly. It is not too much to say that the whole basis of the Israeli occupation of the territories had been decisively undermined. The days of an occupation whose costs in terms of troops deployed, casualties suffered, in the territories and in Israel itself, are acceptable to Israelis are almost gone. Meanwhile the old economic advantages of captive markets and a pool of cheap labour have turned into liabilities, at least in the case of Gaza. In the occupied territories Hamas has emerged as a formidable enemy, while in the South Lebanon security zone Hizbollah is inflicting more military casualties than the Palestinians are within Israel itself.

Hence the contradictory atmosphere of the last few weeks in Israel in which, on the one hand, Bassam Abu Sharif, the well known PLO spokesman, has appeared on Israeli television chatting about when he will get a visa — an indication of Israeli readiness to consider new departures, like talking directly to the PLO — while on the other, the general staff sits in its bunkers plotting an old fashioned eye-for-an-eye attack in Lebanon.

Israel has reaped what it has sown. The Hizbollah movement would never have attained its present importance had Israel not invaded Lebanon, and the radicalised population of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is also to a great extent an Israeli creation. Their growing strength makes the occupation of both the territories and of the South Lebanon strip a burden which Israeli shudders at the thought of facing in perpetuity. But whether the Rabin government yet understands that it may have to settle on imperfect terms — to talk about Palestinian statehood now rather than later, to give up the Golan for a pretty minimal return, for instance — another matter. The only thing to be said about the present violence in South Lebanon is that its sheer uselessness may have a sobering effect on all concerned, but particularly on Israel itself. There lies Mr. Christopher's opportunity — The Guardian.

LETTERS

Swift action

To the Editor:

In addition to my letter of July 24, 1993, relating to the murder of seven street children in Rio de Janeiro last Friday, I wish to emphasise the abhorrence that such a crime has aroused in the Brazilian government and in the Brazilian society as a whole.

As I had already indicated, President Iamar Franco expressed his repudiation of the crime in unequivocal terms and asked the minister of justice to use all available means to make sure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

The president and the minister of justice travelled to Rio de Janeiro last weekend to follow-up the matter with Governor Brizola. Government officials are considering structural measures to address the problems of street children in Rio.

The three policemen apprehended in the case have been charged with qualified murder; for each of the seven murders they may be sentenced from 12 to 30 years of imprisonment. The inquiry has been forwarded to the disposal of the judge in charge of the case.

On Tuesday, the government of the State of Rio de Janeiro dismissed Col. Manoel Henrique de Amorim from his functions as commanding officer of the 5th Battalion of Military Police, the unit in charge of patrolling the centre of Rio de Janeiro and to which the presumed criminals belong.

On July 28, the minister of justice convened a special meeting of the National Council for Children and Adolescents to deal with the issue of street children at the national level.

These elements are brought to the attention of the world public opinion to demonstrate the determination with which the Brazilian government is dealing with the matter.

Fernando S. Alves,
Ambassador of Brazil,
Amman.

Recycling scheme 'chokes'

By Nao Nakanishi
Reuters

BONN — Germany's ambitious scheme to recycle plastic packaging has run into trouble because environment-conscious Germans have collected too much.

"People have gathered far more plastic than we had expected," said Martina Kreck of Dausles System Deutschland GmbH (DSD), a private firm set up in 1991 to coordinate the national programme. "We just do not have enough processing capacity."

DSD has come under increasing criticism as plastic packaging for consumer products, marked with a distinctive green dot logo to signify the material can be recycled, has piled up instead of being processed for reuse.

Regional authorities have threatened to withdraw their support for the system, the most wide-ranging and ambitious of its kind in the world.

Environment Minister Klaus Toepfer has dismissed the problem as a temporary setback which he expects will disappear as new recycling plants are built to meet demand.

"Before, the yoghurt containers and other refuse were just mixed in with other rubbish... I am happy that the piles of plastic are there now for everybody to see," he said.

"That increases the pressure on those responsible to create new capacity and avoid using packaging or sell at the correspondingly higher price," Mr. Toepfer added.

His ministry found the amount of packaging used had fallen by about 500,000 tonnes to 11.7 million tonnes in 1992, the first decline after years of growth.

The programme is paid for by a fee charged for every product licensed to carry the logo and the cost is reflected in retail prices.

DSD, set up by hundreds of German companies, aims by 1995 to gather 80 per cent of the country's used packaging, most of it from consumer products, and recycle about 80 per cent.

Consumers are asked to pick out plastic bottles, containers and wrappings, clean them and put them in special yellow bins and bags for collection every two to four weeks by firms under contract to DSD.

The Germans, traditionally keen on environmental matters, turned to the task with greater zeal than expected.

DSD predicted that 100,000 tonnes of plastics would be collected with other packaging this year but the amount looks likely to reach about 400,000. National capacity for recycling the plastics is only about 165,000 tonnes a year.

This is expected to rise as the system is extended to include all German households by the end of this year from the two-thirds covered currently. Germany gets through about one million tonnes of plastic packaging every year.

DSD tried in vain to persuade local governments to take over much of the excess plastic for dumping or burning until it had built up enough processing capacity.

The amount of plastic waste, which is costly and difficult to recycle, forced industry to come up with an additional 500 million marks (\$291.1 million) last month to rescue DSD from financial trouble caused partly by the failure of some firms using the green dot to pay the licence fee.

Instead of a unilateral fee of about two pfennigs (\$3.5 cents) per package, DSD in October will introduce a new price system, reflecting the higher processing costs for plastics.

With the plastics fee at three marks a kilo (\$80 cents a pound) compared with 16 pfennigs a kilo (\$12 cents a pound) for glass, DSD should be able to fill its coffers and encourage manufacturers to switch to more environmentally friendly packaging.

"We want to create the missing processing capacity as soon as possible," Ms. Kreck said. DSD hopes to handle 350,000 tonnes of plastic next year and 800,000 tonnes by 1996.

It is also looking at building two plants in former East Germany using new technology to convert used plastic into crude oil or gas — a method industry regards as the best way of reusing plastic in the future.

There is already one such plant in the West German city of Bottrop, where about 40,000 tonnes of waste will be turned into crude oil next year rather than being moulded into new shapes.

DSD has had a difficult start with plastic waste. Piles of green dot rubbish were discovered last year on dumps in France and other countries.

But the company is confident it has solved that problem with new limits on exports, including requiring German inspection of foreign recycling sites.

Mob rule sends shivers through Russia's new business class

By Richard Balmforth
Reuters

MOSCOW — The seven gunmen burst into a car showroom in southern Moscow firing machineguns and pistols.

Workers inside the Italian-Russian dealership, themselves armed, fired back. By the time the battle was over, three men were dead. A fourth died later of his wounds.

Last week's Chicago-style shootout — possibly over non-payment of "protection money" — was one of a series of gangland incidents highlighting the tightening hold of organised crime on post-communist Russia.

From Moscow to the far eastern Pacific seaboard, Mafia-style syndicates are springing up to grab rich pickings from Russia's chaotic lurch to capitalism.

They are sending shivers through Russia's new class of entrepreneurs, industrialists and financiers.

In a dramatic appeal Russia's top bankers have pleaded with President Boris Yeltsin to provide protection for them from a campaign of murder and intimidation by mobsters.

Hitmen have killed at least 10 banking officials in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg on the orders of gangs seeking to exert leverage over the commercial banks, according to an open letter signed by five senior bankers.

"The new financial, entrepreneurial institutions are in the

gun-sights of well-organised bands armed with up-to-date technical means," it said.

The racketeers and gangsters have stepped into a void left by the collapse of the old Soviet structures and particularly the KGB state security apparatus that assured foreigners, the rich and privileged of round-the-clock big brother protection.

Former cosmonaut Igor Volk — a member of a privileged elite under communism — was beaten, stabbed and robbed in Moscow this month by assailants who fled in his Mercedes.

Last Tuesday two gunmen shot dead the manager of a central Moscow restaurant, known as a criminals' haunt, and then turned their guns on two kiosk vendors nearby, killing them too.

Many foreign businessmen are reluctant to talk to threats by the gangs, preferring to shut up and pay "protection money" rather than face the alternative, diplomats say.

Interior Minister Viktor Yerin announced last week that 150 organised crime syndicates, comprising 3,000 separate gangs, were operating in the sprawling Russian federation.

Mr. Yerin said a police drive had exposed more than 1,000 mafia-style gangs — unrelated to Italian or American organised crime — in Moscow and other big cities and he was confident the authorities were "definitely winning" the fight.

He consoled himself with the fact that the crime rate for Russia was still lower than in most west-

ern societies but official figures make gloomy reading all the same.

The murder rate rose by almost 50 per cent in Russia in the first six months of the year, with firearms offences increasing three-fold compared with the corresponding period in 1992. In all, 14,800 people were murdered.

The collapse of the once awesome Soviet military machine has increased the availability of guns to the underworld.

A 10-year war in Afghanistan and disillusioned soldiers returning from Eastern Europe mean there are plenty of men who know how to press the trigger.

Law enforcement chiefs in Moscow say they are seeking to rejuvenate the demoralised police force which is understaffed and often quite simply outgunned on the street by the mobsters.

In the present get-rich-quick climate in Moscow, many police officials are simply paid by the gangs to drop their investigations quietly.

One newspaper commentator said the main problem was that the Yeltsin leadership — preoccupied with winning the battle for power in the Kremlin and piecing together an economic programme — had simply not made law-and-order a priority.

"Those in power not only cannot, but do not want genuinely to fight crime, because the level of crime worries them far less than the part they occupy in the power structure," wrote Yuri Feofanov in Moskovskaya Pravda.



Nationwide epidemic: Kiev police arrest a suspected extortionist (File photo)

Las Vegas pyramid — next wonder of the world?

By David Tucker
Reuters

LAS VEGAS, Nevada (AFP) — A new pyramid-shaped hotel, casino and entertainment complex evoking ancient Egypt rises 30 stories out of the Nevada desert as an extravagant new comer, even in larger-than-life Las Vegas.

Luxor Las Vegas, described as an "entertainment megastore," will include a 40 billion candlepower light beam — described as the most powerful in the world — and a "River Nile" circling the interior perimeter.

Circus Circus Enterprises, owner of the \$300 million complex to be opened in October, touts the project unmodestly as "the next wonder of the world."

"What took 40 years and vast amounts of slave labour in ancient times is being replicated today in the sands of Las Vegas as Luxor," the firm said in a new release.

"Luxor is the culmination of our work to blend architecture, technology and engineering into an upscale entertainment megastore," said Circus Circus senior Vice President Bill Paulos.

"Our goal is to create a destination resort whose interior exceeds the promises of its one-of-a-kind exterior."

The pyramid of reflective glass will contain reproductions of artefacts from ancient Egypt, including hieroglyphics, columns and tombs found in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens.

The entrance will sport a 10-story sphinx with eyes shooting lasers that interact with an obelisk and lagoon.

The "museum" also will contain a full-scale reproduction of King Tut's tomb.

Egyptian-theme shows will be staged, including aerial acrobatics, belly dancing and a choreographed chariot race.

Guests will be taken to the 2,500-room hotel by boats across the lagoon and then transported to their suites at a 39-degree angle aboard the elevators set in each corner of the pyramid.

Special effects wizard Douglas Trumbull — of "Blade Runner" and "Close Encounters of the

Third Kind" fame — rigged the entertainment portion of the complex which offers three interactive "adventures" set in the past, present and future.

And then, of course, there is the staple of Las Vegas: gambling.

About 9,300 square metres have been devoted to slot machines, gaming tables, poker, keno and all manner of betting activities.

"The pyramid of reflective glass will contain reproductions of artefacts from ancient Egypt, including hieroglyphics, columns and tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens."

Black, white militants problem for S. Africa

By David Tucker
Reuters

JOHANNESBURG — South African neo-Nazi leader Eugene Terre Blanche speaks frequently of the "coming war between the races."

More militant black groups still use the "kill the boer, kill the farmer" chant — once espoused but now officially disowned by the African National Congress (ANC).

Political analysts say that as South Africa makes the thorny transition from minority to all-race rule, a mixture of white

militancy and black radicalism could prove a lethal cocktail.

"There is potential for them (the extreme right) to be the catalyst for a racial explosion," said Professor Charles van Onselen of the Independent Africa Studies Institute.

The white right, like Mr. Terre Blanche's Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), say their numbers have been swelled by whites who accuse the ruling National Party of being soft on crime and of selling out its Afrikaner heritage.

But Stef Coetzee, from the Independent Africa Institute of South Africa, said he believed

"moderate and centrist" leaders in the right-wing umbrella Afrikaner People's Front (APF) would dump Mr. Terre Blanche when it became apparent ultra-right demands for an independent white state would not be met.

He said he believed multi-party negotiators were ready for a compromise deal offering Afrikaners a "homeland" within a federal South Africa.

"There is every possibility that a settlement for the moderate and centre-right could be found within the federal structure," he said.

Calls by black radicals for the killings of whites and the fears of the white "working class" that they could lose their jobs to blacks in the "new South Africa" provide a fertile breeding ground for white extremism.

The right has linked this and other similar calls by black radicals to a surge in killings of white farmers, their deaths used by the AWB and its allies to rally fearful whites.

When black marchers recently called for the killing of Mr. Terre Blanche, he retorted by challenging them to fight it out face-to-face, adding: "We will surely win."

The "hands-off" policy adopted by the police when Mr. Terre Blanche's uniformed troops occupied the World Trade Centre, forcing multi-party negotiators to hide in a locked room, reinforced the extremists' sense of power.

The subsequent arrests of many of those involved in the occupation dented that confidence but the AWB was soon back in action, occupying a factory "to protect whites threatened by black workers."

The police again took no action.

Multi-party negotiators have sent next April as the date for South Africa's first all-race election but Mr. Terre Blanche has warned of "ships foundering" in the run-up to democracy.

Mr. Van Onselen said the attitude of the police and army would be critical if the extremists went the extra mile and turned their militancy into direct military action.

"It's a terrifying question. The police and state forces need to be literate, skilled and to show they can be used in a preventative way in an intensely volatile situation," he said.

Mr. Van Onselen said he believed that despite the formation of the Afrikaner People's Front, the right wing was fractured and disunited and had minimal capabilities.

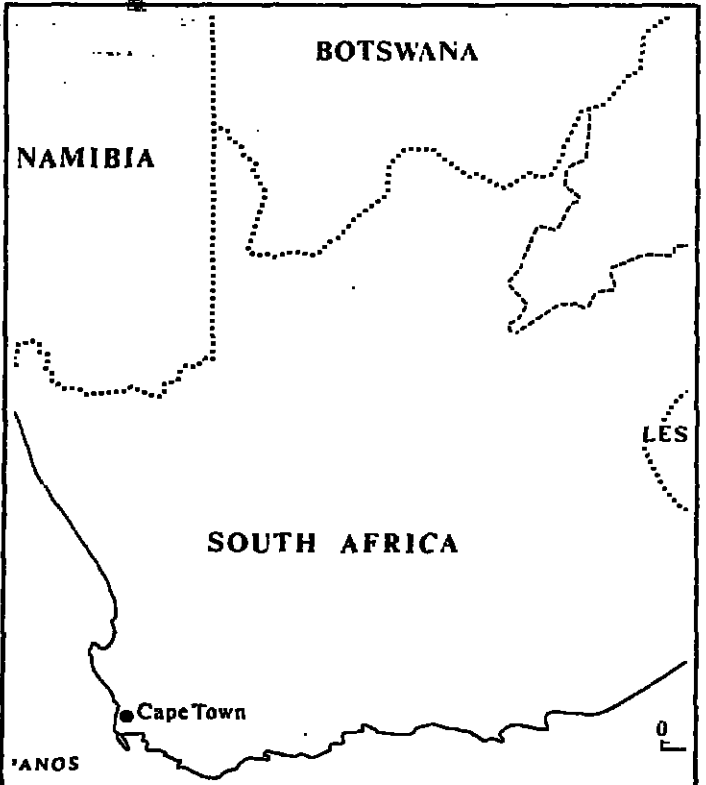
The right-wing were lightly-armed, had no heavy weapons and would be clearly outgunned by security forces. Options for guerrilla war were limited because the right-wingers were well known.

"They (the APF) are trying to reconcile some semi-skilled Afrikaner workers with 'Three men and a goat' from the western Transvaal and crazed psychopaths from England who can't get on with Asians," Mr. Van Onselen said.

"It's a marriage of convenience. It can't last."

Schalk Pienaar, a spokesman for the biggest group in the APF, the Conservative Party (CP), says spiralling violence against both blacks and whites meant right-wingers might soon have to take the law into their own hands.

"It becomes the right of threatened communities to create law and order themselves... the time for offensive defence and retaliatory action," he said.



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The school is organised to encourage a high level of cooperative planning, teaching and evaluating designed to produce success in advancing the learning process.

All our Montessori classrooms are totally equipped with specially designed and sequenced materials which Dr. Montessori devised. These materials, together with highly trained and Montessori certified management and teachers, provide a classroom where the child is stimulated and challenged, but never pressured.

Our main objective is to achieve the following goals for each student:

- 1) Develop a positive attitude towards him/herself, school and life.
- 2) Become a self-confident, independent learner.
- 3) Develop habits of concentration for his/her work.
- 4) Foster curiosity in the student.
- 5) Develop initiative and persistence.
- 6) Achieve inner security and sense of order.
- 7) Help each student develop his sensory motor skills.
- 8) Sharpen his/her ability to discriminate and judge.
- 9) Assist social development.
- 10) Develop creative intelligence and imagination.

In conclusion, we are dedicated to helping each student develop within himself the fundamental skills, habits, attitudes, appreciations and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative learning.

"Never let a child risk failure until he has a reasonable chance of success," Dr. Maria Montessori.

Gulf stock markets grow sharply after war

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A steep decline in interest rates and a post-Gulf war economic upturn have sharply boosted activity in Gulf stock markets though they remained stifled by high state ownership and other restrictions.

Except for Kuwait which is still recovering from the Iraqi invasion, turnover in the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets hit record levels in 1992 since sharedealing began in the region some 15 years ago.

"Gulf stock markets were the most active markets in the Arab World in 1992 due to an increase in liquidity and the growing confidence in regional economies after the Gulf war," the Kuwaiti-based Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee said in a report this week.

"This was coupled with a decline in interest rates on bank

deposits and a trend to give the private sector a greater role. The boom was quite balanced in the absence of harmful speculation and manipulation," it pointed out.

From \$2.26 billion in 1991, turnover in Saudi Arabia jumped to \$3.65 billion worth of 35 million shares in 1992. This pushed the share index to 188.87 at the end of 1992 from 178.77 at the end of 1991.

Saudi Arabia has the largest stock market in the GCC, with 78 banks and companies trading their shares through the most advanced bank network in the Arab World. Steady growth in sharedealing has pushed up their capitalisation to \$14.8 billion from around \$10.6 billion in 1988.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, has reported growth in most sectors due to the end of

the war and the return of nearly \$25 billion in overseas funds. The highest demand in the market was for the shares of the banks, which reported record profits in 1992.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), sharedealing has steadily grown since it began in 1982 despite the absence of an official exchange.

The growth pushed the market value of the shares of the 26 banks and companies listed in the market to a record \$8.3 billion in 1992 compared with their paid-up capital of \$2.15 billion, an increase of 386 per cent. The unofficial index also surged by about 15 per cent to 1,727.65 Thursday.

"Activity could more than double if the UAE opens an official floor and gives access to foreign investors," a UAE dealer said. "The high state ownership in most institutions is also hindering development of the market here and in other Gulf states as governments do not trade their shares."

The stock markets in Oman and Bahrain also sharply grew and officials have predicted continued expansion as more companies join the market and authorities plan to ease restrictions on dealing by foreigners.

UAE economy slows down

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) economy has sharply slowed down because of relative stability in its oil revenues, according to an official report.

After a growth of nearly 25 per cent in 1990, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by only 0.6 per cent in 1991 and 2.5 per cent in 1992, the central bank said in its annual report this week.

The GDP stood at 129.2 billion dirhams (\$35.2 billion) in 1992, at 126 billion dirhams (\$34.3 billion) in 1991 and 125.2 billion dirhams (\$34.1 billion) in 1990, the report showed. In 1989, it stood at around 101 billion dirhams (\$27.5 billion).

The report gave no reason for the lower growth but the UAE's oil production has not sharply fluctuated since the January-February 1991 Gulf war, standing at around 2.2 million barrels per day (b/d) compared with 1.8 million b/d in 1989.

This boosted its earnings to around \$15 billion annually after the war from \$10.3 billion in 1989. The UAE and other OPEC producers raised oil output in 1990 to make up for a halt in Iraqi and Kuwaiti supplies of four million b/d during the crisis.

Clinton praises congressional budget pact

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday urged Congress to pass a tentative deficit reduction plan worth nearly \$500 billion over five years and said it will keep interest rates down and rejuvenate the U.S. economy.

In an early morning Rose Garden appearance Mr. Clinton sought to rally public support for the plan which faces a difficult battle winning approval by the full Congress.

"The time has come to act. Unless the Congress acts on this budget we cannot remove the uncertainty that exists in the economy. We cannot continue to bring interest rates down and we cannot possibly move on to the other challenges that await us," Mr. Clinton said.

"I need your help," he said to the public in the televised address. "This plan will keep interest rates down and grow the American economy," the president said.

He said the tentative plan worked out by Congress comes very close to his original economic goals to cut the deficit without relying on large tax increases for middle income people or cutting social programmes for the poor and elderly.

"I believe this is the least possible (tax) burden we can have and achieve meaningful deficit reduction," he said.

Congressional negotiators announced a tentative agreement Friday on President Clinton's economic plan they said would cut the U.S. budget deficit by nearly \$500 billion over five years.

White House officials hailed the proposal as meeting the key elements of Mr. Clinton's ambitious plan, which includes about \$250 billion in spending cuts and \$250 billion in new taxes.

"There's agreement in principle and we're very encouraged by that," said White House spokes-

man Mark Gearan. "All the key requirements the president started out with have been met by this agreement."

Senate majority leader George Mitchell said the final agreement would be announced Monday and would include about \$500 billion in deficit cuts.

"We are very confident that this will be a programme that will meet the president's original guidelines and will be approved by both the House and the Senate during the latter part of next week," Mr. Mitchell said.

After failing to win critical support from conservative Senate Democrats negotiators Thursday surrendered to their demands and agreed the plan would include a petrol tax increase of only 4.3 cents a gallon (3.8 litres).

The original House version of the bill had a broader energy tax raising \$72 billion over five years, but the new petrol tax raises only \$22 billion.

That left negotiators scrambling to find ways of meeting the \$500 billion deficit-cutting goal at the same time they paid for new social spending demanded by House liberals and the congressional black caucus.

Congressional sources said the compromise included a \$56 billion cut in the Medicare, the U.S. government-sponsored health care plan for the elderly, \$6 billion more than the House approved and \$2 billion less than the Senate passed. The cuts will come from payments to doctors and hospitals.

In a provision designed to win the 38 critical House votes of the congressional black caucus, the new plan includes \$21 billion to expand a tax credit for the working poor.

It also includes a \$2.5 billion expansion of the food stamp programme over five years, congressional sources said.

The measure also includes about \$3 billion for tax breaks and new spending in some depressed urban areas.

Japan's vehicle exports fall to lowest level in 14 years

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's vehicle exports in this year's January-June period fell to 2.79 million, the fewest for any year's first half since 1979, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association has said.

A slump in the U.S. and European markets was the main problem, said an association official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The yen's rise against the dollar made Japanese vehicles more expensive abroad, the official added.

The average closing rate of the dollar in June on Tokyo's foreign exchange market was 107.29 yen, compared with 126.91 yen a year earlier.

The vehicle export total fell 3.5 per cent from the first half of 1992.

It included 2,190,168 passenger cars, down 3.5 per cent from a year earlier; 555,240 trucks, down 7.0 per cent and 45,639 buses, up 33.1 per cent, the official said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dutch unemployment rises

THE HAGUE (AFP) — The number of people unemployed in the Netherlands increased by nearly 25 per cent in the year to June, figures published by the Central Statistical Office have shown. In the period for April to June, 359,000 people were unemployed compared with 286,000 in the same period of last year. The figures for the second quarter of this year were the same as those for the period from March to May. Since 1988 this comparison had shown a fall of about 10,000 people, and the figures this year implied that the upward trend of unemployment was strong, the office said. "Only in Germany and in Spain is unemployment rising as quickly as in the Netherlands," the office said. Unemployment in the Netherlands was estimated to be rising at an annual rate of 26 per cent compared with an average rate in the European Community of 14 per cent, it said.

Norway increases trade surplus

OSLO (AFP) — Norway increased its trade surplus, excluding ships and oil platforms, to 32 billion kroner (\$4.35 billion) in the first half of the year from 25 billion kroner in the same period of 1992, official figures have shown. Norway exported goods worth 107 billion kroner, while imports totalled 75 billion kroner. Exports of oil and gas amounted to 52.3 billion kroner which was 4.1 billion kroner more than in the first half of 1992, the bureau said in its mid-year survey. The increase was attributable mainly to an increase in output and prices, the Central Bureau of Statistics, which published the figures, said. Imports fell by almost three billion kroner in the first six months of 1993. The trade surplus in June fell to 5.02 billion kroner from 6.87 billion kroner in May.

Sofregaz wins Algerian contracts

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian's state petroleum agency Sonatrach has signed contracts worth more than \$330 with French and Algerian companies to expand and improve the productivity of its gas network. It said in a statement a contract worth one billion French francs (\$170 million) was awarded to Sofregaz of France for a gas pumping and monitoring system. The 34-month contract was for the supply and installation of three pumping stations, two telecommunications systems and monitoring devices on a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) pipeline linking the Alrar gas field to Hassi R'Mel in southern Algeria, it said. The investment will be financed by the French bank Societe Generale with a guarantee from the French export credit guarantee agency COFACE, the statement added. "The Alrar-Hassi R'Mel LPG pipeline will enable Sonatrach to consolidate its role of major operator in the world liquefied petroleum gas market, and double its export capacities to more than seven million tonnes with effect from 1996 and to eight millions by 1998," it said. Sonatrach said it also signed a contract Tuesday worth four billion dinars (\$167 million) with four Algerian firms for the construction of two pipelines totalling 600 kilometres.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 1, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Reconsider the ideas and position of the other fellow and you will find that you can quickly come to an understanding with those with whom you have had an argument of late. Clear up any romantic problems as well.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is your day to try to remain at home and get matters worked-out there as they will best suit your own class purposes in the future.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A very good time to find the answers for which you have been searching at whatever lofty sources are available to you and then to really live such prospects.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Think about the various means by which you can have a greater abundance and to spare of whatever your needs happen to be and get advice from outside sources.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Consider now what your own personal goals are and the best manner in which you can expand your time, energies to make them a part of your existence.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A day to see, to be with and to enjoy as many of your close chums and interesting acquaintances as possible and let them know your true aims.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Now you find that the outside world is the place for you to be and to be with good friends and influential associates towards gaining joint goals.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Dash about in public seeing as many persons as possible and engaging in any worldly pursuits and activities that are available to you now.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A day to forget usual activities and get into new and ones that fascinate you and you will find you are able to greatly add to your wellbeing.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) See just what you can do to arrange your time during the coming week so that you are more productive of practical and beneficial results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Think about the various means by which you can please those outside partners and associates with whom you are allied and work more in their behalf.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Scheduling the coming weeks tasks and activities can bring you a much more effective and productive time during the coming days so get busy at this.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You now are a very much interested in pleasures and rightly so and can have a very romantic evening by getting in an affectionate and loving mood.

THE Daily Crossword by Arthur M. Whelan

ACROSS

- Identical
- Vell fabric
- Truck sections
- Poetic
- condition
- Shaulite, of the NBA
- Money, in
- Marquis
- Seismology event
- Tabriz is here
- Setting
- Made over
- Spook
- seaward
- Stallone role
- Church recesses
- Florentine native, e.g.
- Galleries
- Guide
- Chinese diplomat
- Toledo's lake
- Chin whiskers
- Two
- Swiss river
- Dustup
- Fountain and
- Folds
- Runned
- Incensed
- Least stressful
- Five examples
- Rock tour
- assistant
- Stravinsky
- Warm-season amusement
- Horns
- Expiate
- NC college
- For fear that
- Minimum
- Refute

DOWN

- Feather shafts
- Exped
- Ms Maples
- Judge
- Small hats
- Burmese leader
- Cordelia's father
- L.A. athlete
- High
- Scenes
- Flight hazard
- Bonnie slope
- 13 Dispatch
- Sisal plants
- Russo-Chinese
- Adjustment
- switch
- Declare
- Great
- Signals
- agreement
- Spring
- Spoken
- Poker and tongs
- Disintegrate
- Gift presentation
- Rang up
- Male canbou
- 48 Cusneveca
- currency
- 44 Turkish peak
- 46 Atto
- Maternally related
- 50 Roman official
- 54 US author
- 55 Portico
- 59 Nav. off.

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

POKE HONOR BAST
JUMET POLICE GIRD
CAPTAIN SUBSTANTIAL
TRAILING BEST
RIM CHOR
BRAND STONE RITE
ATLANTIC SUBSTANTIAL
KOS ALONG SINNA
SESTINE WARDEN
ORIS DILL
AGUA CONORRIS
GRASP SUBSTANTIAL
NAME ALTER ARID
ARID ALTER ARID

NOTICE

JORDAN ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY PREQUALIFICATION OF CIVIL WORKS CONTRACTORS AQABA THERMAL POWER STATION STAGE II TENDER NO. 59/93

Jordan electricity Authority (JEA) intends to issue tender forms for prequalifications of civil works contractors for the extension of Aqaba Thermal Power Station-Stage II.

The Stage II expansion project consists of 2x130 MW fuel oil fired steam generating units cooled by sea water. The civil works contract involves large sophisticated civil works such as foundation works for the steam turbines, generators, boilers, and for all other mechanical and electrical auxiliary equipment as well as supply and installation of yard piping, all concrete and structural works, excavations, roads, drainage systems, etc. It is expected that local and international contractors with experience in this type of work would participate in this tender. Due to the special type of works covered by the civil works tender and the need of specialised experience, it is expected that some type of joint-venture between local contractors and international contractors shall be introduced.

The construction work is expected to commence on site in May 1994 and the project is expected to be financed by Arab and international development funds in addition to the self-financing by JEA.

Contractors with experience in above described work shall apply for prequalification in accordance with the forms issued by JEA.

Forms of prequalifications will be available from:

JORDAN ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY
PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT
JABAL AMMAN-SEVENTH CIRCLE
TEL. 815615
P.O. Box 2310
AMMAN-JORDAN

Starting from Saturday 31/7/93 for a non-refundable fee of JD150 for each set (2 copies each) payable to JEA. The last day for accepting the filled-in prequalification forms will be Wednesday 1/9/1993 before 12:00 noon at the Tendering Committee Secretary, JEA Offices-Amman.

Iran's privatisation falls behind schedule

TEHRAN (R) — Only 14 of Iran's 391 state-owned companies slated for privatisation by next March have been floated, the head of the Tehran Stock Exchange Taqi Rajaei Salmasi said.

In an interview published in Resalat newspaper, Mr. Salmasi said the remaining 377 companies had to pay their debts or make necessary structural changes before they could be admitted to the exchange.

"There has been no success so far... fourteen companies have been admitted... the remainder of the 391 have financial or structural problems," he said.

Mr. Salmasi confirmed that shares in Iran Khodrow, Iran's biggest car manufacturing company, would be sold from Sunday.

But he did not say how many more companies were likely to be floated by March 20, the end of Iran's current five-year plan which incorporates the privatisation drive.

The turnover on the exchange dropped by 25 per cent in the year to March 20 to 352 billion (\$229 million), reflecting a slowdown in the Iranian economy.

Mr. Salmasi said the exchange would expand its network throughout Iran when 250 computer terminals are installed in Tehran and other cities over the next five months.

Air France launches flyer programme

In its continuous endeavours to meet the client's needs and under the slogan "Ask Us To Reward You for Your Loyalty," Air France announced the introduction of its Frequent Flyer Programme (Frequency Plus) in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan as of July of this year.

Frequencies Plus entitles all Air France full-fare passengers travelling on Air France and Air Inter to earn aeropoints which are consequently transformed into free tickets for

travel throughout the world on the "Air France Group" network. The beneficiary of free ticket could well be the member himself or any other person he may choose.

If the client wishes, these aeropoints could also be used towards class-upgrading on long-haul flights or towards excess baggage.

Air France has already anticipated a "welcoming bonus" of aeropoints for all new members of Frequency Plus.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HINKT
GUNST
EXDULP
VARSOY

HOW THE PANTS ROBBER LEFT THE BRIDGE PLAYERS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GUEST DELVE HEAVEN FUSION
Answer: How to get a van man eating out of your hand—FEED HIS EGO

Bosnia fighting rages on despite peace deal

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Fighting raged in Bosnia Saturday despite a tentative peace deal in Geneva and an agreement by military commanders of the three warring factions to cease hostilities across the republic.

Muslim forces captured two Croat villages outside the Bosnian town of Gornji Vakuf. British peacekeepers said it was the heaviest fighting they have seen in the area.

Kruba and Bistrica fell as Muslim forces continued a campaign against their former Croat allies that has yielded several military successes in recent months, including the capture of four important towns.

In Geneva, peace mediator Lord Owen said that despite Friday's agreement to turn Bosnia into a "union" of three republics, a final settlement had still not been achieved.

Bosnian factions continued their talks in Geneva, turning their attention to the thorny question of how the Bosnian state might look once the fighting stops.

Lord Owen told reporters: "There are all sorts of people out there who want to continue the war, on all three sides, and they will try and trigger off incidents and try and derail the process. There's no doubt about it."

Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio reported shelling overnight and on Saturday in areas to the north of the capital.

It said Bosnian units had come under Serb and Croat attacks in the towns of Maglaj, Tesanj, Zavidovici, Olovo and Brcko.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) said two Serb soldiers

had been killed and six wounded Friday night in a Muslim infantry attack near the town of Konjic, further south.

A U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo, however, offered a cautiously optimistic assessment of the ceasefire, which officially went into force Friday evening after being agreed by the commanders of the Serb, Muslim and Croat forces.

"It is too early right now but the indications are that the fighting has abated considerably throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. I say that very cautiously," said Commander Barry Frewer.

Before the villages near Gornji Vakuf fell, they came under Muslim tank and artillery fire.

"This is the heaviest fighting British forces have witnessed in south-central Bosnia," a U.N. source in the central Bosnian town of Vitez told Reuters.

The two villages flank a supply route used to bring relief supplies into Bosnia from warehouses on the Adriatic coast. The route, known in U.N. parlance as Route Diamond, was closed to all traffic as a result of the fighting.

U.N. sources reported the Croat-held town of Prozor, about 25 kilometres south of Gornji Vakuf, was also under heavy Muslim artillery fire. A T-55 tank was burning in the town.

Under the plan agreed in Geneva, Bosnia would become "the Union of Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

It would not be a confederation, as favoured by the Serbs and the Croats, nor a federation, which the Muslims want.

Bosnian President Alija Izetovic was quick to warn that

own agreement to the new deal had been "preliminary" and depended on ratification by the Bosnian National Assembly.

His warning was reinforced by one Bosnian Muslim leader, opposition representative Mohammad Filipovic, who told reporters as he arrived for the talks: "Nothing is finished. Nothing is accepted yet."

That was also the view of Bosnian army Commander Rasim Delic, who told reporters in Sarajevo: "Nothing is signed yet. It is preliminary to our agreement."

He was also under few illusions about the truce he negotiated with the commanders of the Serb and Croat forces, predicting: "According to experience, it won't last."

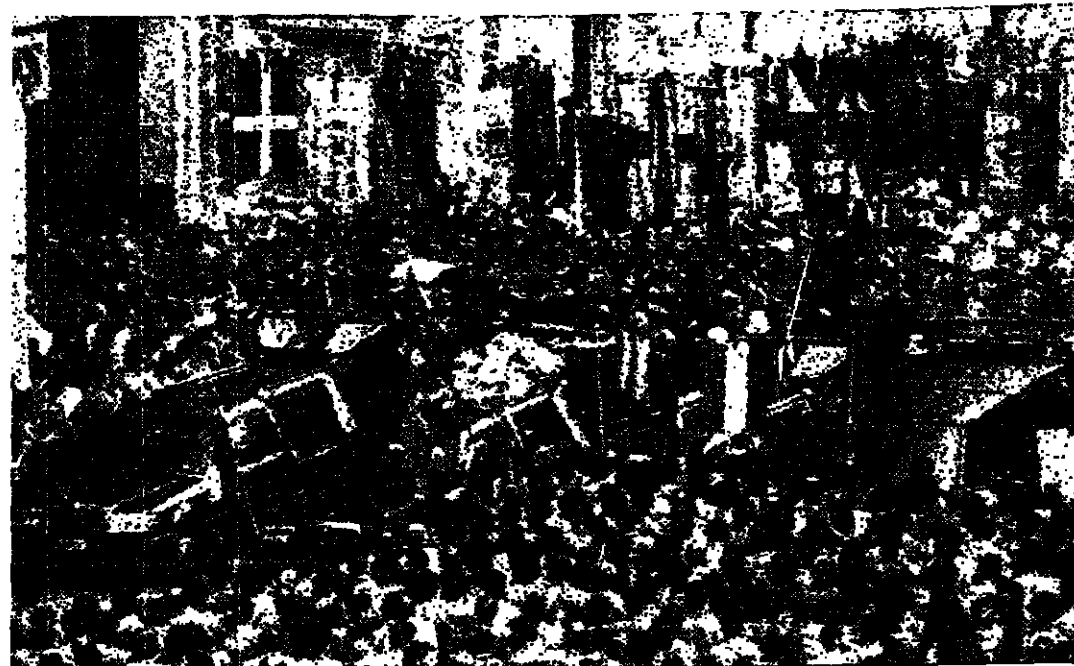
Meanwhile British U.N. troops who came under attack in a quarry in southeast Bosnia-Herzegovina returned fire and saw one of their assailants fall to the ground, the Ministry of Defence said Saturday in London.

The exchange of fire between troops of the Royal Engineers and unidentified attackers took place Thursday in the quarry near Bujacino, the ministry said.

Two Warriors (armoured vehicles) came under fire and the engineers returned some warning shots," a ministry spokesman said.

The firing intensified, the engineers then fired at their attackers and "one man was seen to fall," the spokesman added.

The spokesman stressed that this was not the first time that British troops in Bosnia had returned fire after coming under attack.



Thousands of mourners gather at Milan's Cathedral as the coffins of four of the five victims of the car bomb blast arrive (AFP photo)

Italian judge: Mafia involved in blasts

ROME (R) — Italy's top anti-mafia prosecutor said he believed the mafia was involved in bombings cultural sites in Milan and Rome this week, but he doubted if the crime group acted alone.

"I do not attribute to the mafia the capacity and the intelligence to know famous monuments or relevant artistic sites," Magistrate Bruno Siciliani said. "There is definitely some other force involved."

Five people were killed in Milan Tuesday night by a bomb which destroyed a Museum of Modern Art. Dozens more were injured when bombs exploded outside of two of Rome's most cherished churches — the Basilica of St. John in Lateran and San Giorgio di Velabro.

"It's my opinion that to carry out attacks of this kind you need a great criminal organisation like the mafia that can furnish the manpower and means," Mr. Siciliani said.

But he said the mafia was most probably helped by some other organisation, such as former secret service forces, some type of international group or members of Italy's outlawed P-2 Masonic Lodge.

"Of course all theories are still valid because the investigations are just beginning, but already some theories hold more weight," he said.

"To me it seems evident that these bombs are a threat against the changes occurring in Italy," he said, in an apparent reference to a huge corruption scandal in the political and business worlds.

"This change also is hitting, in my opinion, the big criminal organisations in Italy," he added.

Meanwhile, thousands of Italians crammed into Milan's central cathedral Friday to mourn the five victims of the car bomb attack which has outraged the nation.

Uniformed colleagues of three firemen and a traffic warden killed in Tuesday night's blast carried their coffins past mourners including Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

Applause rang out through Milan's Duomo (cathedral) for more than 15 minutes as the pall bearers marched slowly to the altar, carrying caskets draped in the red, white and green Italian flag and decked with flowers and the men's helmets.

The body of the fifth victim, a homeless Moroccan, was carried to the gates of the cathedral, the city's best known landmark, before being taken to a mosque for a Muslim service.

Cardinal Martini read out a telegram from Pope John Paul II in which the Pontiff condemned "the vile and serious attack."

The funeral was conducted amid the tightest security with police checking telephone booths and rubbish bins in the vicinity of the Duomo for suspicious packages.

Some political commentators have said the bombings, which followed similar recent attacks in Rome and Florence, were designed to slow Italy's huge corruption probe and ensuing political reform.

Among the 3,000 mourners in the church were several members of the Milan "mani pulite" (Clean Hands) anti-graft team, whose inquiries have exposed corruption at the heart of the country's political and business life during the past 18 months.

Antonio Di Pietro, the prosecutor most closely identified with the probe, was given warm backing from mourners.

1 dies in Italy tunnel train crash

ROME (R) — One passenger died and 48 were injured Saturday when an international train rammed another in one of the main Alpine tunnels on the Swiss-Italian border, rescue services said.

Both trains were packed with hundreds of foreign holidaymakers who told rescuers of panic in the darkness after the crash.

But most emerged unscathed because a power failure reduced the speed of the Paris-Florence train before it ran into the back of the stationary Dortmund-Rome Express in the three-kilometre Sempion Tunnel.

The blackout, confirmed by Swiss Railways, appeared to be the main cause of the crash, which occurred at dawn just inside Italy about 150 metres from the end of the winding tunnel during a violent thunderstorm.

Emergency services coordinated by Italy's Interior Ministry said there were 15 foreigners among the injured, including French, Germans, Dutch and one American. The dead passenger was a 45-year-old Italian, Nicola Mule. Four passengers were seriously injured.

Passengers told rescuers of moments of panic after the crash, which knocked hundreds out of their bunks in complete darkness. Some tried to escape from the train and started walking down the tunnel, but gave up, unable to see their way.

Railway officials said the Paris-Florence Express was slowing down because of the power failure when it turned around a bend and suddenly found another train blocking the line. The stationary train had apparently stopped when power was cut.

The train rammed the rear carriage of the Dortmund-Rome Express, but officials said most of the injured were in a carriage in the middle of the Rome-bound train which was knocked off the track.

Houston woman to offer massages to flood victims

HOUSTON (R) — The relief supplies going to the flood-ravaged midwest in the United States are not all bottled water and canned goods — the masseurs and masseuses are coming. Nona Guillory, owner of the Comfort Zone, a Houston massage therapy service, is travelling to Des Moines next week with nine of her therapists to deliver her brand of relief to those battling the floodwaters in recent weeks.

"I'm from Nebraska. I have family in Des Moines and after watching those people sand-bagging on TV for weeks I said to myself 'they need relief,'" Ms. Guillory said in a telephone interview. Perhaps in a nod to mid-west propriety, Ms. Guillory said people receiving the massages will be seated and fully clothed, with no oils used. The therapists will concentrate on pressure points in the upper torso. Ms. Guillory and her colleagues will donate their services for a week, and will work alongside local therapists at various sites in the city chosen by the Red Cross. The massages will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Ms. Guillory said.

Rescue services Friday recovered about 100 coffins and funeral vaults which had been dislodged and swept up by recent torrential floodwaters. About 50 coffins are still floating in the swollen waters of the Missouri, officials said.

Some of those recovered Friday had been shaken open by knocks sustained as they were swept along.

Original Star Trek actor to have heart surgery

EVANSTON, Illinois (AFP) — Actor Walter Koenig, Ensign Pavel Chekov in the original Star Trek series, is to undergo heart surgery here, a St. Francis Hospital spokeswoman said. The 56-year-old actor was taken to hospital Sunday after complaining of chest pains while attending a Star Trek convention near Chicago. He apparently suffered a heart attack. In the series, Chekov is the Starship Enterprise's Russian navigator. NBC television ran the Star Trek series from 1966 to 1969. Six films based on the series and two television spinoffs were also made.

Concert banned for the sake of insect love

WUERZBURG, Germany (AFP) — A music concert was banned Friday by a court here, because the noise would have disturbed insects in a nature park nearby who are currently in the full swing of the mating season. With the help of scientific evidence, the court in this southern German town argued that the crickets, moths and grasshoppers would not appreciate the loud music and that panic would have prevented bats from reproducing in peace. Fifteen hundred tickets had already been sold for the concert which was due to take place Saturday night.

'Vampire' arrested in Latvia

MOSCOW (AFP) — A sadist who drugged children, beat them up and drank their blood has been arrested in the Latvian capital Riga, the Latvian Interior Ministry newspaper reported. The paper, quoted by the Russian daily Rabotnaya Tribuna, said Ivo Simanis, 34, was arrested as a result of a young girl's testimony. She was found, unconscious and bleeding in Riga's Vidzeme district. "A man took my hand to go to his house, he cut me with razor blades and whipped me with a belt," said the girl who managed to escape by "pretending she was dead." Once arrested, Simanis admitted straight away he drugged children whom he managed to lure into his home in order to drain their blood and drink it. He claimed to have got into the habit at the age of 14 and asked police to be "sentenced to death immediately."

Court ruling allows begging

NEW YORK (AFP) — A federal appeals court gave New York panhandlers the same right as charities to beg in the street. The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals concluded that begging for oneself is tantamount to begging on behalf of other organisations and upheld a federal judge's ruling that struck down a law prohibiting panhandling in public. "Both solicit the charity of others. The distinction is not a significant one for the First Amendment purposes," the court said. It criticised the New York City Police Department's treatment of beggars and said they violated the panhandlers' First Amendment rights.

Russian jets bomb northern Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Russian fighters have bombed villages in northern Afghanistan in the first reported air raids on the area, killing 20 people and injuring 30, official Kabul Radio said Saturday.

Eight jets bombed several villages in the Shah-E-Bozorg district of northern Badkshan province along the troubled border with the Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan Wednesday, according to the radio, monitored in Islamabad.

Several villages were destroyed and hundreds of heads of livestock killed, the broadcast said. Kabul says more than 300 Afghans have been killed or injured in artillery attacks by Russian forces deployed across the border in retaliation for cross-border raids by Islamic Tajik rebels who have fled to Afghanistan.

Russian forces have bombarded northern Afghanistan since Tajik rebels who took refuge in Afghanistan after the defeat of their uprising last year launched a raid on a Russian border post on July 13 that killed 25 soldiers and 100 Tajik villagers.

Kabul Radio said a Russian delegation led by Yevgeny Primakov, a special envoy of President Boris Yeltsin, arrived in Kabul on Friday for talks.

Moscow says the Afghan army is backing the rebels, and Mr. Yeltsin has sent reinforcements to Tajikistan to police the border.

Afghanistan has demanded that Russia withdraw its forces along the border and has said it will respond to further attacks.

The cross-border incidents have stirred memories on all sides of the Soviet Union's ill-fated military intervention in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 to prop up a Communist government against



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

Mujahdeen rebels. Moscow sees the frontier as a crucial line of defence against the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, and its Guards are stationed there by agreement with the Tajik government.

Since the fall of Afghanistan's former Soviet-backed Communist government in April 1992, much of the country has been divided into fiefdoms controlled by rival guerrillas who pay little heed to the coalition Islamic government in Kabul.

Kabul says the government is only providing aid to the estimated 60,000 Tajiks who have taken refuge in the north of the country after fleeing the civil war, in which thousands of people have been killed.

Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Saturday denied his country was involved in backing Muslim forces in Tajikistan and rebuffed a Russian call for high-level peace talks.

"Afghanistan is not involved in Tajikistan. This is an internal issue and should be solved by the two parties concerned — the Tajik government and the opposition," Mr. Hekmatyar told journalists at his headquarters outside Kabul.

"If these two parties ask for our mediation we are prepared to help," the prime minister said. Mr. Hekmatyar said he was opposed to a joint meeting of foreign ministers from the region as Moscow has suggested.

"We will not send our foreign minister to Dushanbe," Mr. Hekmatyar said, adding that if he did this it could be construed as an admission that Afghanistan was directly involved in the crisis in Tajikistan.

Mr. Hekmatyar, one of the Mujahdeen leaders whose forces fought the former Soviet Red Army during its occupation of Afghanistan, condemned the Russian attacks and called for a withdrawal of Moscow's troops.

The prime minister said however that Afghanistan would join peace talks if invited by the Tajik government and the opposition forces.

"We and Moscow should not act as the two direct parties involved in the conflict, but only as mediators," Mr. Hekmatyar said. "If Moscow is a direct party in the talks we don't want to participate."

He said Afghanistan and Russia could have bilateral discussions on the issue of the withdrawal of Russian troops — said to number 3,500 — stationed along the Amu Darya River, which marks the Afghan frontier with Tajikistan.

Mr. Hekmatyar said Russian President Boris Yeltsin was "mistaken" when he recently said in Moscow the Afghan-Tajik frontier was also a Russian frontier.

River crest swamps Missouri capital

ST. LOUIS, Missouri (R) — The rising Missouri river submerged part of Missouri's state capital Friday, keeping many civil servants home while St. Louis residents raced to build up levees as the river crest approached.

In one section of south St. Louis Friday evening the Mississippi River overflowed an earthen levee, loosening 12 propane tanks from their moorings. That forced the evacuation of about 700 residential and industrial buildings in a half-mile (one-km) radius, city officials said.

The tanks, which each hold 30,000 gallons (115,000 litres) of propane gas, were secured in an area adjacent to the Mississippi where the River Des Peres empties, but were loosened from one end of their moorings by floodwaters, said Julian Boyd, St. Louis director of public safety.

"The Mississippi River has risen to the point where it is about to engulf the tanks," he said. If the propane gas is released into the air, it could explode if ignited," Mr. Boyd said.

Meanwhile the Missouri River crested at the state capital, Jefferson City, Friday, reaching a level of 38 feet (12 metres). It was expected to stay that high Saturday before receding, the National Weather Service said.

Although the domed Missouri Capitol building is above water, many of the streets and car parks around the building were flooded, State Emergency Management Agency spokeswoman Krish Farris said.

Flood waters threatened to divide the state in two after the Missouri River knocked out of service all but one bridge between the metropolitan areas of Kansas City and St. Louis — which are on opposite ends of the state.

To protect the one bridge crossing the Missouri which is open on the 250-mile (400-km) stretch, workers hauled sandbags and laid concrete barriers.

State workers who live across the Missouri from the capital were told not to come to work because the only local crossing was shut down late Thursday.

"People are being asked, please if you don't have to come into Jefferson City or late, please don't," Mr. Farris said.

The Midwest flooding has already killed 43 people, swamped 16,000 square miles (36,250 square km) of farmland in eight states and caused an estimated \$10 billion in damage.

More than 300 roads and highways are closed in the state, said Chris Sifford, spokesman for the

governor. The swift-moving Missouri River had a ripple effect on the Mississippi, now expected to crest in the St. Louis area at 49 feet (15 metres) Monday, a foot (30 cm) higher and a day earlier than previously anticipated.

Workers used cranes, cement pumps and sandbags to shore up levees in and around St. Louis, home to 2.3 million people.

The St. Louis floodwall, which protects the city from the Mississippi, can withstand 52 feet (15.8 metres) of water.

To seal that barrier against seepage, workers pumped cement Friday under one section, the Army Corps of Engineers said. The corps is confident the 11-mile-long (17.7-km) St. Louis levee will hold against the rising river waters, said spokesman Gary Dyhouse.

In Washington, a Senate committee Friday approved \$4.7 billion in emergency relief funds requested by President Bill Clinton for flood victims. The bill now goes to the full Senate, where approval is likely by next week.

The House Tuesday approved a \$3 billion flood relief bill but Mr. Clinton said more money was needed.

De Klerk hails 'historic' visit

LUSAKA (AFP) — President Frederic De Klerk Saturday hailed his "historic" first-ever visit to Zambia by a South African president as an opportunity for southern Africa to "get its act together." Mr. De Klerk, on a two-day visit to open the Lusaka agricultural and commercial show and to hold talks with President Frederick Chiluba, said he was "not surprised" to have been invited to a country that was one of apartheid's staunchest opponents. "For us it was seen as an opportunity to expand our ties," he said. Clearly intent on doing business, Mr. De Klerk brought both Foreign Minister P. Botha and Finance Minister Derek Keys in his entourage. Ahead of talks and a banquet with Mr. Chiluba, he said: "I will be concentrating on South Africa's role in southern Africa and on the need for us in southern Africa to get our act together."

Man held in S. Africa over massacre

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — A schoolteacher has been detained for questioning in connection with last Sunday's slaughter of 11 people in a church here, police spokesman Captain John Sterrenberg said Saturday. Press reports said the unnamed man was a member of the hardline Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), but Capt. Sterrenberg refused to comment on this speculation. "We are here to hunt down killers. We're not interested in their political affiliation," Capt. Sterrenberg told AFP. He said the man was picked up at his home in Guguletu black township here Thursday and was being held under security legislation which allows police to detain a suspect for 10 days without access to lawyers.

Fighting flares in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Fighting between Khmer Rouge guerrillas and Cambodian government troops has flared in the northwestern district of Battambang. U.N. spokeswoman Susan Manuel said Saturday. "U.N. military observers who visited the (government) 6th Division headquarters witnessed fighting and heard reports of frequent fighting since July 24," Mr. Manuel said. A group of 50 Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacked a government position in Prong Rooh village to the south of Bavel town Friday, she said. The government troops were forced to withdraw and suffered seven men injured. A number of villagers' houses were burnt down in the firefight and villagers were reported to be fleeing to Bavel town for safety, she said.

75 dead or missing in China floods

PEKING (AFP) — A violent storm killed 41 people and left 34 missing in one of China's premiere tourism spots, but hundreds of stranded travellers were safely evacuated from a scenic peak, officials said. More than 400 people were injured by torrential rains that hit the area around Mount Emei, in Sichuan province. Another 7,000 were stranded, including more than 500 mostly Chinese tourists on the mountain. Wang Huacheng, a flood control official in Sichuan, told the China Daily that the storm was the worst ever to hit the area, located 150 kilometres southwest of the provincial capital Chengdu. Damage was estimated at 156 million yuan (\$27 million).

Mondale approved as Japan envoy

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Senate confirmed the appointment of former Vice-President Walter Mondale as ambassador to Japan Friday. The appointment, which was passed by a voice vote without objection, must now go to President Bill Clinton for final approval. In a confirmation hearing before the Foreign Relations committee Wednesday, the 65-year-old Mondale pledged to focus on cooperation rather than mutual "bashing" in areas such as trade.

U.S.: Ukraine commitment includes SS-24s

WASHINGTON (R) — In a sign of continuing tension over the fate of atomic weapons in Ukraine, the United States insisted Friday that SS-24 missiles are covered by a key nuclear reduction treaty, despite Kiev's claim that they are not. "Under the (1992) Lisbon protocol and its associated documents which make Ukraine a party to the START treaty, Ukraine is obligated to eliminate all strategic offensive arms from its territory," State

Department spokesman Mike McCurry said. "These obligations under START cover all strategic offensive arms of the former Soviet Union including SS-24s," he said at a news briefing. Ukraine President Leonid Kravchuk told reporters in Kiev Friday that Ukraine will keep the SS-24 nuclear missiles once it signs the START-I (strategic arms reduction treaty), which is still awaiting ratification by Ukraine's parliament. He said Ukraine will keep its promise to become a non-nuclear state, but the dismantling of 46 SS-24 missiles will have to be accomplished by another treaty with Russia and the United States.

Rare film shows Soviet space disasters

LONDON (R) — British television showed rare footage of a string of Soviet space disasters, most of which were kept secret at the time by an embarrassed Communist leadership. The film, kept secret during the cold war and the cut-throat years of the Soviet-U.S. space race, became available after the break-up of the Soviet Union. It shows that "Nedelin explosion" which killed a top Soviet official in 1960, rescue workers trying unsuccessfully to revive three cosmonauts killed after the Soyuz 11 landing in 1971 and the wreckage of the Soyuz 1, in which Vladimir Komarov was killed in 1967. "They show some of the most horrendous accidents that befell (the Soviet Union) during the time when, obviously, this sort of thing was covered up," Stephen Young of space headline news told BBC Television. "We've never seen anything like this before."

Haiti Senate vote hit by new delay

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — Haiti's Senate once again delayed a key leadership vote, this time amid reports of death threats against one lawmaker and complaints of dizziness that sent another to the hospital. The Senate has been deadlocked for days over selecting a new speaker, a prerequisite for ratifying a new prime minister chosen by exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. A breakthrough seemed likely earlier in the week, as some lawmakers sympathetic to the 1991 military coup that toppled Mr. Aristide showed willingness to compromise to keep on track a U.N.-brokered pact to restore democracy and lift international economic sanctions. Local radio stations said one of those senators, Jude Jean, had gone into hiding after receiving death threats. Other lawmakers considering changing their vote have also received threats and offers of bribes, sources close to the Senate told Reuters.

Cambodians end visit to Laos

VIENTIANE (AFP) — The heads of Cambodia's interim coalition government, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, ended Saturday their first official visit abroad together with a pledge to cooperate economically with Laos. "I think it was a great, great success," Prince Ranariddh said following the signing of a joint declaration in which Laos and Cambodia pledged respect for their common border and territorial integrity and agreed to cooperate in "economic, commercial, cultural, scientific and technical domains." Mr. Hun Sen called the four-day visit "very good." The declaration signed by the Cambodians along with Lao Prime Minister Khamtay Siphandone said the visit "constitutes a striking witness to the willingness to reaffirm traditional ties of friendship, solidarity and cooperation between the Lao and Cambodian nations and peoples."

Clinton may have been in too big a hurry

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton says his hurry to get started may have been responsible for the sometimes rocky periods in his first six months as president. And, he says, some had a little bit better sense of the interplay of the power centres around town. "I think there was less of a honeymoon here than I Sunday in the Los Angeles Times magazine. "I was genuinely surprised when the Republican senators attempted to filibuster — and did successfully filibuster — the emergency jobs bill." The interview was conducted last month by Times reporters Jack Nelson and Robert Donovan. Mr. Clinton characterised a lot of his early mistakes in office as "mistakes of process," not product. "You can make an argument that I should have started a little more slowly... but I was in a hurry to get started," Mr. Clinton said he even enjoyed the battles for his programme.

U.N. vows action against alleged abuses in Somalia

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali reacted strongly Friday to allegations of human rights abuses by U.N. troops in Somalia, saying action would be taken against any proven charges.

But the U.N. chief said in a statement that many allegations in a report by the London-based Africa Rights group were "spurious or based on hearsay."

"We are nevertheless extremely sensitive to the gravity of some of the allegations made in the report," he said. "If these allegations are found to be true, action will be taken against those responsible."

He said a copy was sent immediately to retired U.S. Admiral Jonathan Howe, the U.N. special representative in Somalia, for discussion with force commanders.

Africa Rights said some U.N. troops in Somalia, both in the capital Mogadishu where there is a fighting and in areas of relative calm elsewhere, were hated by the population for grave abuses, including killing and torturing civilians.

It said the U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was regarded as another feuding faction in the country's civil war and had done little to investigate abuses among the 22-nation troop contingents.

Belgium forces, based in Kismayu, were singled out as being particularly brutal. In Brussels, a spokesman for the defence ministry said Africa Rights blew real events out of proportion and therefore was conducting a "disinformation" campaign.

"By generalising some cases and saying the Somalis have no recourse against the U.N. troops, Africa Rights is committing disinformation," the spokesman said.

Africa rights staff who went to Kismayu listed allegations which included the murder of civilians and beatings.

But the defence ministry spokesman said a Belgian legal detachment composed of a deputy public prosecutor, a clerk and two members of the state police was in Somalia and had investigated every case that had come to light.

The detachment had investigated 36 problems between the Belgian troops and the local population since the Belgian contingent arrived in Somalia, he said.

Some of these cases, including that of a Somali man who was shot when being searched by Belgian soldiers in a mosque last May, are still being investigated, he said.

Dr. Ghali said the report failed to mention that international action had led to a dramatic improvement of conditions in Somalia, by alleviating starvation and much of the violence against relief groups delivering aid.

South Koreans arrive

A specially formed engineering battalion of 252 South Korean troops arrived in Somalia Saturday to rebuild roads and drill water wells in the shattered country.

"Our first mission is to repair the main supply route from Mogadishu to Belet Uen," Major Kim Kwang Woo said. The town of Belet Uen, where German troops are stationed, is more than 300 kilometres north-west of Mogadishu.

The "Evergreen" battalion, formed three months ago and specially trained to serve with the U.N. peacekeeping force in Somalia, flew into Mogadishu

aboard a Korean Air DC-10 airliner.

The troops, wearing camouflage fatigues, lined up on the tarmac and sang a military song. "Here We Stand," before boarding U.N. helicopters for Balad, 30 kilometres north-east of Mogadishu.

An advance party of 60 soldiers arrived a month ago to prepare the South Korean base camp in Balad.

It is Korea's first deployment of soldiers on foreign soil in four decades except for a small number of troops sent to provide logistics backup for allied forces during the Gulf war in 1991.

U.S. soldiers have guarded the demilitarised zone between communist North Korea and pro-western South Korea since the Korean war ended 30 years ago.

Corporal Sang Hyup Youn said he was "very grateful" to have a chance to help Somalia.

"I'm not worried about the shootings of U.N. soldiers because we have our duty to do and we can take care of ourselves," said Capt. Youn, 23, from the city of Taejeon, 100 kilometres south of Seoul. "It's my first time abroad."

Thirty-six U.N. soldiers have been killed and more than 150 wounded, mostly in Mogadishu, since clashes erupted with militia-men loyal to renegade warlord General Mohammad Farah Aidede on June 5.

The Koreans will repair Somalia's poor roads and drill wells to restore water systems destroyed in factional fighting that plunged the country into anarchy after dictator Mohammad Siad Barre was toppled in January 1991.

The carnage triggered a famine that killed an estimated 350,000 people.



RUINS OF WAR: Sheikh Nabil Kawook, the military leader of Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, Saturday inspects damage from the Israeli bombardments of 'Ain Qana village (AFP photo)

Russian parliament halts ill-fated emergency session

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian deputies began, then later suspended for five days, an ill-attended emergency session of parliament Saturday amid rising tensions between lawmakers and the government.

Prior to the suspension deputies ratified a decree by Boris Yeltsin prolonging a state of emergency in the northern Caucasus regions of North Ossetia and Ingushetia, the official reason for the session.

Beaten by parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov because fewer than 100 out of 380 had broken off their holidays to attend, deputies had earlier announced their intention to contest Mr. Yeltsin's dismissal of Security Minister Viktor Barannikov dismissal.

Mr. Barannikov had been sacked for his mishandling of the crisis on the Tajik-Afghan border and for alleged breach of ethics.

Parliament had also been expected to discuss last week's botched ruble banknote recall.

The suspension was announced to allow deputies time to draft a law aimed at forcing Mr. Yeltsin to submit to parliament all nominations and dismissals of ministers of the interior, defence, foreign affairs and security.

The emergency session marked

the latest round in the long-running battle between the conservative-dominated legislature and Mr. Yeltsin's reformist government.

It came amid recriminations over last weekend's snap decision by the Russian central bank to withdraw billions of pre-1993 ruble banknotes from circulation.

The move caused panic and confusion among Russians forced to wait hours in queues to try to spend or exchange the invalid notes.

Hours before the emergency session Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov said on television that the decision to withdraw the currency had had political objectives "which were to discredit the president and the government."

Mr. Fyodorov, who earlier described the decision as "Stalinist," said that neither he nor his ministry had been involved in the "totally absurd action," which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had also opposed.

On Friday, Mr. Khasbulatov, speaking on Russian television, blamed Mr. Fyodorov for the ruble recall, which he said resulted from policies which had led to the collapse of the ruble zone.

"Fyodorov, backed by the IMF, wanted to push the former

Soviet republics out of the ruble zone. This policy led to the collapse of the ruble zone, and it was this which forced the central bank to adopt this reform," he said.

"The most important question today is the economic situation. Instead of attending to that, we are being pushed towards adopting a new constitution, towards useless debates and political confrontation," he said.

Mr. Fyodorov on Saturday dismissed the charges as absurd "lies and political provocations."

Mr. Yeltsin, who cut short his holiday to return to Moscow to deal with the banknote crisis, on Monday moved to ease restrictions on changing invalid rubles.

But parliamentary leaders two days later went even further by stating that rubles invalidated by the central bank would be reinstated as legal tender.

Mr. Yeltsin has over the past month, made headway in his plans to push for constitutional reform and scrap the hardline parliament by laying the groundwork for new parliamentary elections this fall.

But his opponents have pounced on the ruble fiasco and the controversy surrounding the security minister's sacking to stir up anti-government feeling.

Kuwait wants Arabs to denounce Baghdad

KUWAIT (R) — Arab states which sympathised with Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait must denounce Baghdad if they want to improve relations with the emirate, its information minister said Saturday.

"What we are hearing from these countries is not significant unless it is associated with declared acts," Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Saud Al Sabah said in an interview with Al Qabas newspaper.

"If they want to restore relations with Kuwait they should take the initiative of correcting their stances."

Kuwait's relations with several Arab states and groups, notably Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, have been strained over their stands during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Sheikh Saud said Kuwait wanted them to denounce the occupation and recognise the U.N. demarcated Kuwait-Iraq border.

Members of Kuwait's parliament have criticised the government for welcoming recent overtures from Yemen and Tunisia, whose foreign minister visited Kuwait in June with a letter expressing hope for an end to the "negative effects" caused by the Gulf crisis.

Sheikh Saud also reiterated that Kuwait was not ready to start a dialogue with Iraq's current government.

"We do not want Iraq to believe that we would restore relations with it with the presence of the current regime."

'No slaughter'

Twenty Palestinians were formally executed after Kuwait's liberation for collaborating with Iraq occupiers but there was no mass slaughter of Palestinians, the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported Saturday.

The figures appeared in a KUNA news feature on strained relations between Kuwaitis and Palestinians during Iraq's occupation and after the 1991 Gulf war.

"Official reports and reports of humanitarian organisations operating in Kuwait reveal that the number of Palestinians missing in the post-liberation era was 60, and the number of those spontaneously court-martialled and executed due to their cooperation with the occupation was 20," it reported.

COLUMN 800000

Khasbulatov calls Thatcher 'old bag'

MOSCOW (R) — Russian parliament head Ruslan Khasbulatov has launched an astonishing attack on former British Premier Margaret Thatcher, calling her an "old bag" for saying parliament should be dissolved to end Russia's political crisis.

Mr. Khasbulatov, speaking in an interview shown on Russian television, said Mrs. Thatcher's comments were humiliating for Russia and its people. The interview was recorded Thursday.

Mrs. Thatcher, speaking on television last Sunday what she would do first to tackle the chaos wrought by the break-up of the Soviet Union, said she would disband the Russian parliament and call new elections. Mr. Khasbulatov, locked in a rapidly escalating power struggle with President Boris Yeltsin, said Russian journalists should have challenged Mrs. Thatcher on this point.

"You (the journalists) can humiliate yourselves if you want to," he told the interviewer. "But don't humiliate your own people, your own politicians, who are not in the slightest bit inferior to the various old bags (babushky) who pay us visits."

Guatemala police chief jailed for beatings

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — A Guatemalan court has sentenced a top police chief and four other officers to three years and nine months in jail for violently breaking up a peaceful demonstration.

The court said the five officers ordered riot police to beat peasants with their batons when they broke up a march in Guatemala City in July 1992. During the march around 500 indigenous people were demanding land rights to the Cajoja Ranch where they lived in northwestern Guatemala. They have since been relocated by the government.

Inspector General Mariano Mazariegos, third-in-command of the National Police, was the highest police officer to be jailed in a human rights case in Guatemala.

Thai minister worried over alleged sex party

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's prime minister, who has vowed to get tough with his country's pervasive sex industry, has cautioned a cabinet member over reports that he supplied prostitutes to a party. Pressure groups meanwhile called for the minister's resignation. Deputy Finance Minister Boonchu Irithong was widely reported as having provided prostitutes for his guests at a celebration Wednesday at a Bangkok hotel for his New Aspiration Party (NAP) members of parliament. Despite Mr. Boonchu's denials and suggestions that the young women seen at the function were either singers or hotel staff, Mr. Chuan warned him about his conduct, newspapers reported Saturday.

The political atmosphere is now confusing. So please be more careful in all of your conduct," Mr. Chuan was reported as telling the deputy minister. An umbrella organisation of pressure groups including human rights, civil liberties and women's organisations has called for Mr. Boonchu to resign over the scandal. The mass-circulation Thai Rath newspaper broke the story about the "service girls" at the celebration, held to mark the ending of the parliamentary session.

Girl swapped as baby wants to 'divorce' birth family

SARASOTA, Florida (R) — A teenage girl who was inexplicably switched with another baby at birth goes to court Monday for the right to sever all ties to her biological parents. The heart-rending case of Kimberly Mays, now aged 14, has inspired intense media interest. It dates back to the birth of two girls within a few days of each other in 1978 in a hospital in the central Florida city of Wauchula. But the child of Regina and Ernest Twigg — who today is known as Kimberly — was sent home with Robert and Barbara Mays. And the child born to the Mays ended up with the Twiggs. The baby the Twigg couple received died of a heart defect in 1988. But blood tests taken during attempts to save her life showed she was not their daughter. The Twiggs began searching for their biological child, whom genetic tests identified as Kimberly Mays. In 1989, the families agreed Kimberly would remain with Robert Mays — whose wife had died when the child was two. However, the two families agreed the Twiggs, who have seven other children, would have visitation rights.

Aideed camp seeks to whip up religious spirit

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Fugitive warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed's supporters are trying to whip up Islamic fervour to swell support for his crusade against United Nations forces in Somalia, local intellectuals say.

Rallies staged twice a week by about 2,000 Aideed sympathisers in the warlord's south Mogadishu stronghold are taking an increasingly religious tone.

A dozen Muslim leaders at the front of Saturday's rally brandished Korans and accused U.S. soldiers of desecrating and looting mosques during attacks on Aideed militiamen in June and July.

Youths handed out pamphlets with a news agency photograph of two American women soldiers wearing bikinis on a Mogadishu beach. In a graphic illustration of the problems of stationing foreign troops in this traditionally conservative society, the photograph was captioned: "Naked American women in Islamic Somalia."

Among the more than 21,000 U.N. troops in Somalia are sizeable contingents from Muslim countries including Pakistan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

But anti-American and anti-Western feeling has grown since

U.S.-led U.N. forces attacked Aideed's headquarters in retaliation for the June 5 killings of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers, Somalis say.

"Confront Satan, fight colonialism," the crowd shouted, chanting "Allah-u-Akbar."

Mogadishu intellectuals say an increase in the number of veiled women and the stoning to death in January of several women accused of adultery signals growing popular backing for Islamic fundamentalists.

Halima Abdi Arush, president of the Somali women's organisation tida, said fundamentalists were profiting from the conflict between the U.N. and General Aideed, wanted by the U.N. for the killings of the Pakistanis but still held up here despite a \$25,000 price on his head.

"By attacking Aideed the U.N. is creating hostility and playing into the hands of the religious radicals," Ms. Halima said in a recent interview with AFP.

Islamic relief agencies funded by Sudan and Saudi Arabia refuse to give women food unless they wear veils," Ms. Halima said.

"In times of war and trouble, people look for solace in religion," she said.

Rebels hit Turkish tourism

ANKARA (R) — Rebel Kurds have stepped up their assault on Turkey's lucrative tourist industry with a bomb attack on a western seaside resort, but appear ready to free six tourists kidnapped in the troubled south-east.

Friday's blast from a bomb planted in a litter bin in a crowded street in the Aegean Sea town of Kusadasi slightly wounded 18 people, including six foreign tourists.

Last Sunday a bomb explosion injured three tourists in Istanbul. Bombs in the southern resort of Antalya on June 27 and July 17 killed one person and wounded 25, including 12 tourists.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) declared this week that Istanbul and western Turkish resorts were now in a "war zone."

Police in Antalya said Friday they had arrested 13 PKK militants in connection with the bombing there.

The PKK is locked in a vicious struggle with security forces in the mainly Kurdish southeast, where 350 soldiers, rebels and civilians were killed in July alone. It wants to cripple tourism to deprive Turkey of revenue and blacken its reputation abroad.

More than seven million tourists flocked to Turkey last year, producing earnings of \$3.64 billion, tourism ministry figures show. Revenue of \$4 billion had been expected this year.

A similar campaign of violence by Muslim militants in Egypt has devastated that country's once-booming tourist trade.

No figures were immediately available for the impact of the PKK threats, bombings and kidnappings on tourism in Turkey, but some tour operators earlier reported a rash of cancellations.

Cemil Bayik, head of the PKK's military council, said the attacks were not meant to harm civilians but destroy an industry he said was helping fund a "dirty war" in the southeast.

"Tourism is objectively supporting this war politically and financially. Because of this we are telling them (tourists) 'don't come, if you do, we won't be responsible for the consequences,'" he told the English-language Turkish Daily News.

Its correspondent reported that he had handed an appeal to Mr. Bayik in Lebanon from the families of four Frenchmen, one Briton and an Australian kidnapped in southeast Turkey this month.

The paper said the PKK leadership was likely to decide at the weekend to free the hostages on humanitarian grounds.

The correspondent, whose mediation mission apparently enjoys official sanction, had guaranteed that he could ensure the safety of the hostages after their release, the daily said.

NEWS IN B' F

Widnall gets Senate committee approval

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A Senate committee Friday approved the nomination of the first woman to head a branch of the U.S. armed services. In a voice vote, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved President Bill Clinton's nomination of Sheila Widnall as Air Force secretary and passed her name on to the full Senate for confirmation. Ms. Widnall, 55, is an aeronautical engineer and associate provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Testifying before the committee, Ms. Widnall denied reports by Boston-area members of the Anti-Defamation League that her husband belonged to a yacht club in Marblehead, Massachusetts, that refuses to allow Jews to join.

Women nominated as war crimes judges

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United States and Britain both nominated women jurists Friday to serve as judges on an 11-member U.N. war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The United States proposed former U.S. Federal Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald of Texas, who is now in private practice. Britain nominated Dame Margaret Booth, who has served as a judge of the English high court of justice since 1979. The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously on May 25 to set up an international tribunal at the Hague to try people accused of murder, rape, torture and other atrocities in the former Yugoslavia since 1991. Each of the United Nations' 184 members, as well as countries with U.N. observer status such as Switzerland, has until Aug. 3 to nominate up to two candidates to serve as judges on the war crimes tribunal.

Babangida repeats call for interim government

ABUJA (AFP) — Nigeria's military ruler Ibrahim Babangida Saturday reiterated his call for creating an interim government as a way out of the country's political crisis, officials said. They spoke after General Babangida met with leaders of the two parties that fielded candidates in June 12 elections that were later annulled by the regime. Those parties, the centre-left Social Democratic Party and the conservative National Republican Convention, had agreed Wednesday to reconsider the interim-government proposal after initially rejecting it. They said then that another option proposed by the president, holding another election on Aug. 14, left too little time for the regime to meet its pledge of handing over power to a civilian administration on Aug. 27.

10 die as domestic flight crashes in Nepal

KATHMANDU (AFP) — A Nepalese domestic flight crashed Saturday at Tanahu, 150 kilometres west of here, killing all 18 people aboard, state radio reported. The Dornier aircraft, owned by private carrier Everest Air, went missing after taking off from Kathmandu airport. The flight had already been delayed two hours before takeoff due to bad weather. The aircraft was carrying 15 passengers and three crew, officials said.

Court remands four top Bombay brokers

BOMBAY (AFP) — An Indian court Saturday allowed detectives to question four top Bombay brokers arrested on charges of swindling a national insurance company to pump money into the stock market. City Magistrate L.D. Motwani remanded Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Brokers Bhupen Dalal, A.D. Narottam, T.B. Ruia and J.T. Gandhi in police custody until Aug. 5 after rejecting bail appeals. The influential stock brokers were arrested late Friday by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) detectives probing a \$1.3 billion securities scam engineered by a coterie of corrupt brokers, bankers and bureaucrats. The four are charged with using forged bank documents to skim \$57 million from the mutual funds division of Life Insurance Corporation.

Government rejects threat

(Continued from page 1)

doors," he said in direct criticism of the government.

"We are taking note of the

criticism and the praise that the government is receiving and an opinion is being made," said Dr. Abu Nawar. "But we do not accept threats through these political acrobatics."

Israel suspends assault

(Continued from page 1)

It also said it would "intensify contacts with international parties" to communicate Israel's "false accusations" about Hizbollah's resistance to Israel's occupying army.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa called on the United States to press Israel to end its assault on South Lebanon and warned that otherwise its credibility in Middle East peace talks would be in doubt.

"We believe that the United States should exert efforts to stop Israel from continuing its shelling in Lebanon," he said.

"If the United States is unable to stop Israel from continuing its bombardments, how can we believe it is capable of implementing Security Council resolutions which constitute the substance of the U.S. peace initiative."

He was speaking after the meetings of Arab foreign ministers in Damascus.

Syria, a power broker in Lebanon where it has 35,000 troops, and Iran, the main backer of Hizbollah, have been engaged in intensive talks to try to end the violence in Lebanon.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has been in Damascus since Thursday meeting Syrian and Hizbollah officials.

Diplomatic sources said Mr. Velayati had advised Hizbollah not to intensify fighting with Israel.

However, the official Syrian newspaper Al Thawra said in an editorial on Saturday "it is inconceivable that Syria and Lebanon should disarm the resistance in order to assure the Israeli occupation of the safety of its boisterous soldiers in southern Lebanon."

Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid has called for international intervention to stop the Israeli military campaign in Lebanon.

"The international community must confront this situation," he said in an interview broadcast on Egyptian radio on Saturday.

The Israeli operations threaten the peace process, which

we wish to continue, enabling it to achieve peace and stability in the region," he added.

"The Arab League asks the international community to end the Israeli aggression on South Lebanon," he said in the interview monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

In Geneva, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has voiced deep concern about Israel's attacks on southern Lebanon, reminding all sides in the conflict that international humanitarian law obliges them to spare civilians.

The Swiss-run agency said the flight of hundreds of thousands of civilians from their villages "in very precarious conditions" has created a "critical situation."

An ICRC statement urged all sides to allow the evacuation of casualties and to spare hospitals, ambulances and doctors.

Save Lebanon Inc., a U.S.-based humanitarian organisation, is launching a relief campaign to provide emergency medical and food supplies to the thousands of displaced by the Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon.

The organisation has also called on the United States to provide long-term assistance in order to rebuild the destroyed homes and resettle the refugees.

"There is an urgent and critical situation in all of Lebanon," Khatmei Osseiran-Hanna, executive director of Save Lebanon, said in a press conference.

Noting that complete damage assessments are difficult to come by at this point, Ms. Osseiran-Hanna said there has been extensive damage to homes and other civilian structures.

Many villages have been reduced to rubble, Ms. Osseiran-Hanna said. While thousands of people are heading north to Beirut, many others "have no place to go," she said, and many of them are "sleeping in the streets and begging for food."

In the western part of east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, reporters said about 100 carloads of refugees who fled during the hostilities returned to the town of Mashgara and nearby villages.



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